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The Stately Owners of England

There are many words that could be applied to the Secretary of State for the Environment, but 'foolish' is not usually one of them. The truth is, sadly, that Mr Anthony Crosland is being 'used'. He is being used in a time-honoured way, taught – literally – to public schoolboys in their earliest history lessons. Stand socialist principle on its head, the lesson goes, and nobody will ever notice. The socialist principle being upturned in this case is that great (or indeed small) beautiful old houses are part of the *people's* heritage; that this is the meaning of the phrase 'the nation's inheritance'; and that these buildings must therefore be preserved for the people. But what is now happening is that houses may be preserved, at great expense, so that their owners can continue to live in a style to which they believe they are not just accustomed but entitled. Or the houses can be bulldozed.

The most notorious recent example of Department of the Environment carelessness is, of course, Stonor Park. The contents – notably Lord Camoys's interesting if scarcely historic collection of stuffed birds – have been sold. Sold, too, at twice the price the auctioneers expected, thanks to an exceedingly well-organised publicity campaign. (Lord Camoys said he was 'bust' at a reception given at the Connaught Hotel.) In this case, the fate of the house itself remains most important, since the furniture was not an integral part of the house, but recently acquired. The fate of Stonor itself remains uncertain. It is up for sale, and it is quite possible that the Department of the Environment might step in with a better offer than that made by Lord Camoys's son. There has, after all, been some £50,000-odd spent on the place in grants. The minister might (perhaps rightly) feel obliged to rescue the house from the threat that otherwise it could be pulled down.

It is a threat which ever-increasing numbers of owners of decaying mansions are now using. Probably the most typical recent example is Brough Hall in Yorkshire (inhabited by the same family since the reign of Edward II). The present owners, Mr and Mrs Ben Worthington, decided that the

house was too big for their budget, and offered it to various bodies – the National Trust, the army, some Catholic orders. All these turned it down, so the Worthingtons then applied for permission to destroy two-thirds of the Hall so that they could continue to live in the remainder. Which part to destroy was more or less a matter of taste, specifically the taste of the Historic Buildings Council. Their decision (to break up the Elizabethan core and the early 18th-century York School additions) would, incidentally, have turned a symmetrical house into a preposterous wreck. But that is not the only conclusion to be drawn – i.e., that the Department of the Environment cares more for lineage than houses. A further point is that Mr Crosland and his advisers have since been trumped by the Worthingtons, who now want to sell Brough. As the Secretary of State's permission cannot be revoked, they can include in the bill of sale a potentially lucrative ministerial 'consent to demolish'.

Part of the reason for this kind of trouble is the ludicrously small amount the DoE can manage to spend on buildings of 'historical interest' – some £1.5m. a year, the same as it was in the days of the great Grange Park scandal in 1972. Responsibility for this particular meanness devolves on the Treasury and its sense of priorities, since most people working in the Environment Department (including no doubt Mr Crosland himself) would like nothing better than to have more money to spend.

The long-term question, though, is whether they would spend it properly. During the Grange Park affair the NS suggested that it would be safer, and possibly even in the long run cheaper, for the state to buy the freehold of all listed buildings, give the occupants long leases, and take on the landlord's duties of supervision and maintenance. It is a solution which, crudely, could be sold to everyone from the most soft-hearted nostalgic to the most hard-headed businessman. But above all, it should appeal to democrats who believe that if there is national wealth to be regained, it should be shared. Not put under the rake or on to the bonfire.

Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Entertaining Mr Thorpe

Those who live by their image die by their image, and Mr Jeremy Thorpe is no exception. He is a public figure, and very little else. His image has been built up over the last nine years in a series of well-composed photographs: Mr Thorpe, on the eve of the Liberal Assembly, taking a brisk walk along the sea-front; Mr Thorpe doing his exercises; Mr Thorpe vaulting over a traffic barrier; Mr Thorpe, pictured here enjoying a joke with the enormous Mr Cyril Smith; his brown derby hat; his natty suits; his marriage to a countess. On and on, but always roughly the same theme – the irrepressible, the energetic, the likeable Mr Thorpe, the darling of the press, the brilliant mimic, the entertainer. And he is indeed very entertaining: when he mimics some politician, you hardly notice that the performance has begun – his voice and his expressions modulate with perfect ease. There is only one role in which he has failed so far, and it looks as if he will shortly have to give up trying.

That the Liberals should be run by this charming actor-manager is not inappropriate. For a long time they have specialised in novelties and celebrities. Going back a bit, there was a Mr Dominic le Foe, a retired magician. There was Mr Ludovic Kennedy, the celebrated husband of a famous ballerina. There was Mr Robin Day, familiar to viewers. Mr Peter Hain, the Man You Love to Hate, Mr Clement Freud, the dog-food salesman, and Mr Smith form part of the present repertory group. The last-named, however, has turned out to be much more than just a pretty face. It is he and Mr Grimond, together with circumstances beyond our control, who will finally do for Mr Thorpe.

Mr Grimond's views are well-known. Just as he has always been in favour of free enterprise, so he has always been in favour of success. There was his famous speech of 1957: 'The old life-buoys which have kept this party afloat so long are dropping astern, and in the next ten years it is a question of get on or get out, and let us make it get on.' When, at the end of those ten years, he followed his own philosophy and got out, Mr Grimond's man was Mr Thorpe. The election, however, was far from convincing: six votes for Mr Thorpe (including Mr Thorpe's own vote), three for Mr Eric Lubbock (including Mr Lubbock) and three for Mr Emlyn Hooson (y compris Mr Hooson). The rivals stood down, but when Mr Thorpe stood up to address the 1967 Assembly he made very little impression at all. He was supposed to be a member of the Left. He was supposed, indeed, to be to the Left of Mr Grimond. Somehow, however, the Left-wingery failed to materialise. By the next year's Assembly, he was not only at loggerheads with the 'Marxist' Young Liberals. He was also being

undermined by the mischievous Mr Grimond.

There was a phrase of Mr Grimond's about 'having our teeth in the real meat of power', which referred to the role that the Liberals should be able to play in the first Wilson government. This phrase became changed in Liberal mythology to 'the red meat of power', and was used to refer to aspiration which soon became obviously impossible. As Mr David Steel charmingly put it: 'The continuing leftward momentum of public opinion carried us through the 1966 election to emerge with a dozen seats, but for the whole of the 1966-70 Parliament the red meat had disappeared, with our false teeth embedded in it.' And where were Mr Thorpe's teeth during this period? All Mr Steel could say was that, with the Liberal Party near to bankruptcy, Mr Thorpe was fully occupied in raising funds. Mr Thorpe had spent his whole time handing round the begging bowl. The Liberals were reduced to six seats in 1970. In the following year Mr Thorpe joined London and County Securities, and the allegations of Mr Norman Scott were being investigated by the police, who found them – according to the *Daily Mail* – totally unreliable.

As a former Liberal Party president, Mr Trevor Jones, remarked, 'If Jeremy could just believe he was the next prime minister he would get to Number 10.' It is easy, in retrospect, to see why he could not believe such a thing. He had already apparently given assurances to the parliamentary party that if the sexual allegations were made public and proved damaging to the party he would resign. By the end of 1972 he was also, according to his own version, so unhappy about the publicity surrounding London and County that he wished to resign his directorship. With this double sword of Damocles hanging over his head, he would not only have to be lucky to escape obloquy, he would have to go on being lucky.

For some time, luck was on Mr Thorpe's side. There were the Rochdale and Sutton and Cheam by-elections in 1972, the *annus mirabilis* of 1973, and the triumph of winning 6m. votes (although only 15 seats) in February 1974. Even the disappointment of the following October, with the loss of two seats and 700,000 votes, could be said to have been inevitable. The press was indulgent over Mr Thorpe's business record, and he might even have considered that chapter more or less closed. As for last week's 'day of agony' for Mr Thorpe, there was even a sort of desperate good luck in that, since it looked for a moment as if the whole world, for fear of seeming intolerant on the one count (unsubstantiated) would let him off the hook on the other. Saturday was probably Mr Thorpe's last good day. The *Mail*, in a front-page story headed 'Document from missing Lib helps support for Thorpe', told its readers that the payment of money to Mr Scott had nothing to do with Mr Thorpe, that Mr Peter Bessell 'in a signed statement to his London solicitors, has said that payments to Scott arose during Mr Bessell's own association with a woman friend'. On the same day the *Mirror*, under the banner headline 'Thorpe's Hunter', portrayed the affair as an attempt by South African intelligence, BOSS, to destroy the Liberals. Mr Thorpe at this stage is reported as having been optimistic about his chances of weathering the storm. He was alone in his optimism.

He had reckoned without Mr Grimond, who, over the weekend, returned to his old theme: it was get on (in next month's by-elections) or get out. Or rather, if the Liberals did not succeed in the by-elections, then their leader would have to take the blame 'whether innocent or guilty', since 'the leader of a party which does not get into office and goes on in the same way is unwise to stay indefinitely'. Where, under such circumstances, could Mr Thorpe turn for support? Not to the parliamentary party, which is now unanimous that he should go some time soon. Certainly not to Mr Smith, who has successfully opposed Mr Thorpe in the past and is a most effective whip. The fact is that the Liberal MPs were dissatisfied with Mr Thorpe before, and had only resisted the temptation to dislodge him because there are too many prospective candidates for the succession.

If the story ended there, it would be possible to envisage Mr Thorpe waiting on until the much-canvassed new election procedures come into effect, remaining long enough for the Liberals to feel that they are not persecuting him. But the story does not end there. Indeed, every day new questions arise. Mr Bessell is phoned in California, and says there was no woman, and no affidavit. It is revealed that an anonymous donor gave Mr Scott £2,500 on election day, February 1974. The next day, Mr Bessell tells the *Express* that the payment had nothing to do with his love life, and *Mail* that there was a woman, and an affidavit, and that Mr Scott 'knew too much about his personal life'. A second court-case is coming up, in which Mr Scott may have another opportunity to speak in court. Too many questions have been raised, and the publicity has been too great. Too great even for Mr Thorpe, who always enjoyed it in the past.

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Eric Heffer

Is This Socialism?

The Labour Party just now is undergoing serious stresses and strains. The membership is restless. In certain constituencies this is manifested by serious efforts to remove sitting, mainly right-wing, MPs. In Scotland some members are gravitating towards nationalism, with Labour malcontents creating a new Scottish Labour Party, with an apparent left-wing bias. In England and Wales there is a growing disillusionment which could lead to mass abstentions at elections. The TUC is under pressure from its rank and file, who rightly demand more positive action to deal with rising unemployment. It is in such a situation that Labour Party members need to re-examine their basic philosophy. This is particularly important for the Left wing of the party, whose aim is to create a genuine socialist democracy.

Over the years, the media have increasingly equated the Labour Left with authoritarian ideology, the most recent example

being the ITV Chalfont television programme entitled, 'Who says it could never happen here?' In doing so they play down any criticisms the Left has of Soviet or other communist countries, but highlight the Labour Left's criticisms of dictatorships in Chile, Spain, Iran etc., and then dishonestly suggest that the Left has double standards. Columnists like Bernard Levin, as well as Lord Chalfont, indulge in this sort of thing. To a limited degree they have been successful. The constant harping on the same theme, from their point of view, has had some positive results, and today too many people genuinely believe that Labour's Left is out to create a one-party, undemocratic, authoritarian state.

Tory ideologists such as Sir Keith Joseph, now aided and abetted by Margaret Thatcher, also help to spread this false gospel by equating private enterprise with freedom and democracy. Their simple, but basic, theme is that if public enterprise is extend-

ed, state power is also extended and state power means greater control and centralisation, and that this in the ultimate means the end of democracy. Therefore, they argue, if we wish to continue with a free, pluralistic society, we must have free enterprise with minimal or no state interference.

It is the fear of being classified, by the Tories or others, as authoritarian that makes the Right wing of the Labour Party come down in favour of a mixed economy, with the proportion of the mix in favour of private enterprise. They say public ownership is necessary for specific purposes, i.e., under certain conditions to solve a particular problem, but not as a principle. This brings them into conflict with Clause 4 of the Party Constitution. It is significant that recently we have had a number of the more articulate British revisionists, such as Crosland and Hattersley, active in giving lectures and speeches, while at the same time certain European Social Democrats have entered into an exchange of letters with each other. These lectures, letters and speeches have clearly revealed that most of those seeking again to redefine social democracy are in reality writing socialism out of the scenario altogether.

What we want is not social democracy as defined by Crosland, Hattersley etc., but democratic socialism. In saying this, I am



*'By the time you swear you're his, shivering and sighing,
And he vows his passion is infinite, undying -
Lady, take a note of this: one of you is lying.'*

- Dorothy Parker

sure I will be accused of playing with words, that social democracy is only another way of saying democratic socialism. Those who argue this are ignoring history, particularly since 1914-18. The fact is that social democracy as understood prior to 1914 has virtually turned into its opposite. Social democracy began as the Marxist trend within the embryonic Labour Movement. In Britain, the Marxists organised the Social Democratic Federation, led by H. M. Hyndman. The German Marxist party of Wilhelm Liebknecht, August Babel, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky etc., was the German Social Democratic Party, and both wings of the Russian Social Democratic Party, i.e. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, were Marxists. It is as incorrect to say that Marxism inevitably leads to an authoritarian state as it is to say that Adam Smith's philosophy of free enterprise leads inevitably to capitalist dictatorship, although both things have happened. The democratic socialists reject both the Stalinist or pseudo-Stalinist solution to our problems as well as the chaos of capitalism, whether democratic or authoritarian. That is why they are as opposed to the authoritarian capitalism of today in Spain and Chile as they were to Nazism and Fascism in Germany and Italy.

The Collectivised Economy

In his Fabian pamphlet *Social Democracy in Europe* Anthony Crosland says that social democracy differs from communism in two fundamental respects. 'In particular, it rejects the Marxist thesis that socialism requires, depends on, and indeed can be defined as, the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The ownership of the means of production is not now, in our view, the key factor which imparts to a society its essential character.'

The key sentence which follows sums up the so-called modern social democratic attitude: 'Indeed, I would go further. A mixed economy is essential to social democracy. For while a substantial public sector is clearly needed to give us the necessary control over the economy, complete state collectivism is without question incompatible with liberty and democracy.' It is not surprising therefore that Crosland's lecture, upon which his pamphlet is based, was so ecstatically received by sections of the Tory press, and welcomed with such rapture by Sir Keith Joseph in the House of Commons.

Quite consciously Crosland's criticism is not just directed against communism – it is equally directed against socialism. If Crosland is saying that in a socialist society it is unnecessary to own publicly every small business, sweet shop and newsagent etc., I would agree with him; but to suggest that socialism cannot be equated with a democratic society if the economy is basically collectivised, is wrong. So wrong in fact that it undermines the whole struggle for socialism.

It is true that if we look at the Soviet Union and any of the Eastern European communist countries, as well as China, Cuba etc., then the thesis appears to have some validity because in those countries there is basically a one-party dictatorship. This,

however, could have been avoided and was not inevitable. In Eastern Europe, the so-called socialist regimes were installed at the point of Soviet bayonets. It was the presence of the Red Army that helped the communists into power, and it has been the Red Army that has kept them there, as the East German uprising, Hungary 1956, and the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968 proved beyond doubt.

The real problem facing democratic socialists is how to create a society which will retain democracy, yet bring about fundamental changes. We on the Left of the Labour Party passionately believe in and defend democracy. It is our view that it is impossible to have a socialist society without democracy: the two things are indivisible.

I agree entirely with Roy Medvedev, the courageous Russian socialist critic of the Soviet leadership, who wrote in his book *On Socialist Democracy*:

Socialist democracy is simultaneously a goal and a means. Democracy is essential as a value in itself. To be able to express one's thoughts and convictions freely without fear of persecution or repression is a vital aspect of a free socialist way of life. Without freedom to receive and impart information, without freedom of movement of residence, without freedom of creativity in science and the arts, and without many other democratic freedoms, a true socialist society is impossible.

There are those to the Left of the Left wing of the Labour Party who condemn bourgeois democracy. While I fully agree that bourgeois democracy is limited and is rightly open to criticism, again I agree with Medvedev when he says:

But, with all these reservations, it is important to stress that the sum total of various political and social institutions which, taken together, form the system of bourgeois democracy is not simply a fiction . . . on the contrary, all these institutions and mechanisms are the products of decades, sometimes centuries, of stubborn struggle by the people for their rights.

Extending Democracy

The evidence of thought control in most Communist countries, as for example in the German Democratic Republic, is overwhelming. Heinz Brandt, who remained a left-wing socialist, despite his imprisonment both by the Nazis as a communist and by the Ulbricht regime as a so-called 'agent of the West', clearly underlines this in his book *The Search for a Third Way*. It is worth recalling at this point the prophetic words of Rosa Luxemburg, which summed up what subsequently took place in Stalinist-controlled countries: 'The public life of states with restricted freedom is shabby, wretched, schematic, sterile, precisely because the living well-springs of all intellectual riches and progress have been cut off by the exclusion of democracy.' Medvedev and Rosa Luxemburg have clearly defined the view of Labour's Left that socialism must mean the development and extension of democracy and not the diminution of it.

This brings me to the thorny problem now under discussion in the European socialist movement, but one which (certainly at the moment) we do not have seriously

to face in Britain, which is: what should be the attitude of socialists towards co-operation with the communist parties? Have there been any fundamental changes in the communist parties towards democracy? If words were the sole criterion, it would be easy to say that they have, because most West European communist parties now declare their belief in democratic concepts, and are wedded to the idea of change without the establishment of one-party rule. For example, John Gollan (ex-general secretary of the British communist Party), in the January issue of *Marxism Today*, has a long article entitled 'Socialist Democracy – some Problems', sub-titled 'The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in retrospect'. At the end of the article he says: 'Looking back, the 20th Congress, whatever the trials and tribulations it brought, was a great political turning point for all of us.' It is an obvious attempt to say that the British CP has learnt from history, that it admits mistakes and that it is no longer under Soviet control, and is democratic in its organisation and its determination of policies and other matters. Gollan writes:

The internal repercussions in our party, as in most others, of mass repressions and crimes revealed by the 20th Congress were painful and difficult. Thousands of members left. We had accepted the position in the Soviet Union in the Thirties, taking the public trials at their face value . . . It is easy to see in retrospect that we were wrong.

Working with Communists

Unhappily for Gollan, the lengthy argument outlined in his article is destroyed by the last sentence when he says, talking of the Soviet people and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that 'it is to their everlasting credit and to the credit of their party, the CPSU, that they had the will and the strength boldly to expose and root out those defamations'.

This, at the very moment when Soviet dissidents are being thrown into prison incarcerated in mental institutions with authors being expelled from their country, and Jews living under a cloud, and where there is no freedom of movement or any of the freedoms which are vital to a democratic socialist society. I am afraid that declarations about democracy within the Western CPs cannot be taken too seriously until it is admitted that the Soviet Union has a long way to go before it is genuinely democratic socialist state.

The recent declaration of the French and Italian Communist Parties says that the 'stand for the plurality of political parties including the right of existence and activity of opposition parties'. What are we to make of this? As I wrote earlier, in Britain it is not a matter of serious import, because while the CP has some strength in the trade union movement, it has virtually no political support, having, over the years, a declining vote. In France and Italy, however, there is a different picture. The communist vote is strong, and no democratically elected left-wing government could get into office unless it had an agreement with the communists. Under the circumstance

it is clear that socialists must pursue a policy of 'horses for courses'.

However, in cooperating with the communists, European socialists must be ruthless in their opposition to any tendencies on the part of the communists to turn away from their public declarations. Contrary to what some may think, I believe the communists are more vulnerable from the Left than from the Right. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the socialist parties who cooperate with the communists must have clearly defined and positive socialist policies.

Take, for example, the French and Italian communists' declaration that 'all freedoms which are the result of the great bourgeois democratic revolutions, or of this century's great popular struggles led by the working class, must be safeguarded and developed. This applies to the freedom of thought and expression, of publication, of meeting and association, of demonstration, of travel at home and abroad, to the inviolability of private life, to religious liberties, to the complete freedom of expression for philosophical, cultural and artistic trends and opinions'. If the two CPs depart from that declaration, then the socialists should expose them as perpetrating a fraud and deception.

No doubt it will be argued that this is naïve and that if the CP became senior partners in any socialist-communist coalition, they would pursue 'salami' tactics as they did in Eastern Europe. That would be a danger, but while democratic socialists look on the Italian and French CP declaration with some scepticism, thousands of CP members and supporters must regard the Stalinist regime, or even present-day Eastern European regimes with some horror. At the same time they have no wish to vote for the continuation of the capitalist system.

In the British Labour Party there must be the fullest possible debate. The Left, in pressing for its point of view must, unlike the Right wing in the past, do so by persuasion and totally reject any bullying or threats of expulsion. One of the weaknesses in the Labour Party at the moment is that it is not attracting in sufficient numbers idealistic youth, who tend to hive off and join the various sectarian socialist groupings which have arisen in the past decade. Right-wing revisionist policies, retreats from the Manifesto, abandonment of socialist objectives are not the best methods of recruitment. That is why it is even more important that the Left should restate its position, and then go out and rally the movement around its declared objectives.

Alexander Cockburn

A Many-Splendoured Candidate

'Love,' wrote one of the more esteemed Washington political columnists recently, 'has been lost to the political lexicon for 40 years but (Jimmy) Carter has brought it back with a flourish . . . In his soft Southern voice, the former Governor closes his appeals for votes with these slowly spoken words: "I don't want anything selfish out of government. I think I want the same thing you do. And that is to have our nation once again with a government as good and honest and decent and truthful and fair and competent and idealistic and compassionate, and as filled with love as are the American people".' There is, the columnist added, 'always a catch in his throat, a moment's expectant pause and just a glimpse of moisture in his eyes, before he says "and as filled with love as are the American people".'

Since the announcement of his candidacy in September 1972 Jimmy Carter, then halfway through his term as Governor of Georgia, has been stumping the country. Stop after stop, 16-hour day after 16-hour day, month after month and indeed year after year his eyes have glistened with moisture at the mention of love. 'I'm not a lawyer and I'm not from Washington,' he tells audiences amid approving laughter. 'If I ever lie to you,' he often concludes, 'with more emotional pauses, 'or if I ever mislead you, please don't vote for me.'

It's a good act. And the message he is selling in it is designed to go down well this year. He'll take a blowtorch, he

promises, to the federal bureaucracy and cut back the number of federal agencies from 1,900 to 200. He'll clean up the tax code. In fact, to hear him, there's just about nothing he won't do after he rides into Washington on the crest of the people's longing for sincerity, reform and love.

For many months nobody paid much attention to Jimmy Carter. Then, a few weeks ago, he made a good showing – very relatively – in a recondite spasm of the democratic process in Iowa, where a small proportion of the voters were trying to figure out which delegates they wanted to send to the Democratic convention. Shortly afterwards he did rather less well in Mississippi before once again winning some headlines in another delegate caucusing operation in Maine. Now, in a field vibrant with nullity, he is almost regarded as the 'front runner' so far as real, upcoming primaries are concerned.

What is his appeal? So far as some Northern liberals are concerned, he is the man they believe can 'stop George Wallace'. Since 1968 this has been a regular requirement of Democratic candidates, guaranteed to win them commendation in the national press and on national television. And Carter, as a Wallace-stopper, is thought to have fine credentials, specifically that he is the 'voice of the New South'. Now the 'New South', as a journalistic myth, has been going strong practically since the end of Reconstruction. The rough idea, patronising in essence, is that finally, cleaving his way

through the bull whips, cattle prods and axe handles wielded by old Southern bigotry, is coming the White Knight, preaching inter-racial amity, an end to intolerance and a better world all round.

Now it was Jimmy Carter who finally, in 1974 after he had launched his presidential drive, hung a picture of Martin Luther King in the state capitol in Georgia. It was Carter who called for a new age of tolerance in his inauguration speech as Governor. It is Carter, the 'peanut farmer' and 'nuclear physicist,' who sends out a whole series of messages: to Northern liberals that he too is liberal, to blue-collar workers that he is a working man himself, to Washington-haters that he is not from Washington.

In fact, the more you look at Carter, the more contradictory the messages seem. 'Antipolitics' turn out, naturally, to be politics. 'Sincerity and candour' turn out to conceal impressive distortions of his record and a truly astounding inconsistency in political positions. Just about now people are uneasily beginning to ask whether – in the post-Watergate era at that – they are being sold a very odd bill of goods.

To start with, Carter in his primary governorship fight in 1970 fought along more or less straight Wallace lines. Campaign aides, it's been recently alleged, distributed to white barber-shops and white Baptist ministers a photograph of his opponent being given a champagne shampoo by two black basketball players in the course of a victory celebration. He told Georgia law enforcement officers that in the event of campus unrest he would be prepared in the last resort to send in the National Guard with orders to shoot to kill. He said that Lloyd Bucher, the captain of the *Pueblo* (the ship captured by the North Koreans) should have been court-martialled for surrendering instead of fighting to the death. He received the endorsement of Roy Harris, the racist who had organised the state's White Citizens' Council. He expressed, and later fulfilled, a promise to invite George Wallace to speak before the state legislature. He won the primary with just 7 per cent of the black vote, and later with Lester Maddox – a noted former Governor and bigot whom Carter declared to be 'the essence' of the Democratic Party – running as Lieutenant-Governor he swept to victory as Governor.

His record as Governor was not so bad, although his legislative reforms were nothing like as great as he has subsequently claimed. In 1972 he fought vigorously to prevent Vietnam from being the issue in the presidential campaign. As he later explained it: 'We should have appreciated and supported Nixon's efforts.' Since then his positions, frequently reversed, tot up to something like this: the CIA has been badly hurt by recent revelations, only 5 per cent could be trimmed out of the Pentagon budget (one of his sponsors is Admiral Rickover, father of the US nuclear navy). He thinks 'détente has been pushed too far' (and never opposed the Vietnam war till 1971), he favours capital punishment, would abolish corporate income tax, is totally opposed to abortion. He would perform his famous surgery on the federal bureaucracy but admits that so far he has

not worked out the details and indeed cannot name one agency he would abolish.

The picture of Carter which, in fact, finally emerges is of a clever, thoroughly opportunistic politician, who can claim he is a nuclear physicist although he only did graduate work in engineering, say he is a son of the soil, although in fact he warehouses other farmers' peanuts, tell audiences in 1970 'I never was a liberal. I am and always have been a conservative' and audiences now that 'I've always been a liberal on civil rights and social needs', write to a constituent in 1972 that 'I've never had anything but the highest praise for Governor Wallace', and tell liberals now that he regards the touchstone of his fortunes as whether he can beat George Wallace in the Florida primary (which he almost certainly cannot, though by then it may not matter).

Carter may do reasonably well in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. It is also highly probable that Wallace will do well in Massachusetts, too. But by then the

Carter bandwagon may be really rolling. Already some old McGovernites and Kennedy workers are clambering aboard. Carter has a truly religious belief in the certainty of his victory and one thing such people want to do this time around is to pick a winner – as early as possible. Carter is an infinitely adaptable piece of political putty. Julian Bond, one of the black leaders in Atlanta whose support Carter's people have often claimed, has said: 'Carter wouldn't be my first choice for President, or even my fifth. His liberalism is largely a myth. The reason he gets such a good press is that whenever the rest of the country thinks of Georgia, they think of Lester Maddox.' Lester Maddox has said of him: 'If Richard Nixon had had Carter as an adviser he would never have had to resign.' In 1976, reeking of love and candour, the Carter brew is the 'New South's' answer to Southern California, which produced Richard Nixon and latterly Ronald Reagan.

New York

Peter Hillmore

Non-Playing Directors

For a salary of £100 a week, the leader of the Liberal Party spent part of his time away from political activity encouraging people to invest their savings in a bank which didn't deserve a penny of anyone's money. Even after London and County Securities was accused in court of charging a staggering 280 per cent interest on a second mortgage, even after he had expressed doubts about the company and a wish to resign his directorship, and just two months before the bank's ignominious collapse, Jeremy Thorpe travelled to Bournemouth to open a new branch, and thus encourage still more investors.

Those people who, encouraged by the presence of Mr Thorpe on the board, decided to invest in London and Counties Securities received a glossy 36-page book full of old engravings and comforting new pictures. There are three large photographs of Mr Thorpe opening the bank's new London headquarters. And, most comforting of all, a full-page colour picture of the L&CS board. Mr Thorpe is shown looking alert and sitting next to the chairman of the company, Gerald Caplan – a man whom Mr Thorpe described as full of 'genius and drive', and a man whom two Department of Trade inspectors last week described as full of 'inherent deviousness'.

The report on the extraordinary activities of L&CS is nevertheless too sympathetic to Mr Thorpe and his fellow non-executive directors. Because none of the 125,000 depositors lost their money (the Bank of England mounted a hurried rescue operation) the inspectors conclude in the end that Mr Thorpe's role in the tawdry affair was 'irrelevant'. They describe his role as not much more than a cautionary tale for politicians, and Mr Thorpe has responded to

this leniency with equal understatement, characterising his role as 'an error of judgment'.

It was more than that: it was a complete lack of judgment. Shareholders lost money when the bank collapsed, and some of them were undoubtedly encouraged to put their money in L&CS shares by the presence of Mr Thorpe on the board. What is more, in theory at least, the shareholders were the people who employed Mr Thorpe and paid his salary of £5,000 a year from May 1971 to December 1973.

The inspectors write that Mr Thorpe is now aware that a politician's political reputation is his most valuable and his most vulnerable commodity. The L&CS affair shows that for the rest of us, without a responsible board of directors, the same can be said of our savings. This is why the ramifications of the L&CS affair go beyond speculation about its effect upon Mr Thorpe's political career. They call into question the whole role of non-executive directors and what their purposes and functions are, or ought to be.

Non-executive directors are a tradition in City boardrooms; any prominent businessman, or non-socialist politician for that matter, can be reasonably sure of picking up quite a few, accompanied by press releases which describe how his breadth of experience and expertise will serve as a valuable addition to the board's strength.

We know differently now. Jeremy Thorpe's admitted inaction over the boardroom affairs of his bank is not, to be fair, an isolated and regrettable example of the inactivity of non-executive directors. Last year another Department of Trade report, on the £5m. share profit made by a former Lord Mayor of London, Sir Denys Low-

son, concluded that the non-executive directors had not been sufficiently vigilant. The arrogant dominance of the Rank Organisation by Sir John Davis continued for years in spite of, or perhaps because of, the large number of non-executive directors on the board, including a former governor of the Bank of England.

But there is considerable evidence that, if they so choose, directors like Mr Thorpe could perform their duties adequately. In a report on the responsibilities of a public company, the Confederation of British Industry said firmly that one of the main functions of a board of directors is to appoint the chief executive and to monitor his performance. Mr Thorpe could have done this. Consider what the chairman of L&CS, Mr Caplan himself, said on 11 May 1971 when he announced the appointment of Jeremy Thorpe to the main board:

I believe with his reputation and energy, together with his undoubted ability, he will be a most valuable addition to our board. His international and Commonwealth connections will strengthen and broaden still further the future prospects of the bank, and I am confident that London and County will benefit greatly from his *active participation in our company's affairs.* (My italics.)

Mr Caplan was, however, right in one respect – from his personal point of view Mr Thorpe was a valuable addition to the board because he didn't question Mr Caplan's activities, however questionable they might have been. When they were questioning Mr Thorpe the inspectors apologetically suggested that the L&CS board 'was used as a rubber stamp for Mr Caplan's schemes'. To which Mr Thorpe ruefully replied: 'I think that would be fair comment.'

Fair comment it may be, but it is still far short of a justification. As Palmer's *Company Law* firmly points out: 'The reliance of a director upon his co-directors, and the officers of the company, should not be unquestioning.' There is little doubt, as the inspectors make manifestly clear, that Mr Thorpe and his fellow non-executive directors did not sufficiently recognise that they 'should behave as reasonably conscientious persons, aware of their responsibilities to investors and the fact that investors are relying on them'.

The shabby goings-on at London and County, in the Lowson empire, and at Rank are not signals of the death-knell of the non-executive director. Indeed, there are moves afoot to widen the activities of such board members. While the trade unions dither over worker representation on company boards (Frank Chapple last week defiantly signed his name to the Plowden report which rejected 50-per-cent trade union membership on a new Central Electricity Board), many City bodies are calling for even more non-executive directors on company boards.

They will be there, the argument goes, to represent, in the changing social climate, interests not only of thousands of shareholders but also of outside interests like the community at large. This sounds a new idea, but it is really little more than a political re-wording of the CBI report of three years ago: that a board should monitor the performance of a company. This may seem obvious – but it wasn't to Mr Thorpe.

Robert Fisk

Ulster Fears the Economic Screw

In 1911 the County Tyrone photographer Robert Welch set up his camera outside the gates of the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast. Fascinated by the rapid growth of Irish industry and its effect on the geography of his country, Welch took a remarkable photograph in the smoggy evening of hundreds of Protestant workers leaving the yard for home. The print – which is now on file in the city's museum – shows the Loyalist workers in cloth caps, white shirts and ties, walking past a row of battered trams whose wooden destination boards are predictably carrying the names of Shankill and Crumlin Road, the Protestant heartlands of west Belfast. Behind them, in the fog, loom the cranes and derricks of the yard and between them can just be seen the faint and ghostly outlines of a great new liner on the stocks.

In many ways, Harland and Wolff has changed little since Welch took his historic picture. The shipyard men prefer duffel coats and anoraks now and many of them contribute to the evening traffic jams but the buses still leave each evening for the Shankill, the cranes – which today include two giants from Krupps – dominate the city's skyline and still only a few hundred of the 10,000 workers are Catholics. And just as the shipyard provided the raw recruits of the old Protestant Ulster Volunteer Force during the Home Rule crisis one year after Welch took his photograph, so the Protestant workers there provided a nucleus for the Ulster Workers' Council which staged the frightening industrial stoppage throughout Northern Ireland in May of 1974. The UWC still threaten the British with a strike, for the Protestant industries still provide the backbone of rebellion against Westminster just as they did over half a century ago. Only in 1911 the industrial revolution was still bringing wealth to Belfast and today only an extraordinary subvention of around £400m. a year from London is keeping Northern Ireland solvent.

Whether Britain is using this economic sterility as a weapon against the extreme Protestants is likely to turn into a serious and potentially damaging political issue in Northern Ireland. For in the past six months three of the five concerns whose workers virtually controlled the UWC strike have run into serious trouble. Two of them – the Rolls-Royce components plant at Dundonald on the eastern outskirts of Belfast and the Standard Telephone and Cables factory at Larne – are to close altogether with around 1,400 redundancies. The third, Harland and Wolff, has been ailing for years but is currently losing £500,000 of government money each week and there are scarcely any orders on the books for the coming year. Government civil servants at Stormont who once listened with anxiety and anger to Jim Smyth and Harry Murray and the other grass-roots trade union UWC leaders as they crowded over Brian

Faulkner's fallen executive in 1974 now find themselves in the curious position of talking to the same UWC men about redundancies, only this time the position of political advantage has been reversed.

The Northern Ireland Office, of course, insists that there will never be any question of strangling Protestant firms for political reasons. It points out, quite accurately, that Westminster has paid out almost £140m. in ten years to keep Harland and Wolff afloat, £60m. of it last July. Yet the most substantial promises of aid to the yard were made under the Tories and when Mr Stanley Orme, Labour's Northern Ireland minister of state responsible for industry, spoke in the Commons in October, he made it clear that no more money would be given to the yard unless there was a substantial increase in productivity. In October, Harland and Wolff had already consumed £13m. of the latest grant. In spite of Mr Orme's silence on the matter, the workers could scarcely have forgotten that it was he who announced a postponement of £5m. aid at the height of the May 1974 strike, a gesture interpreted then as a direct economic reprisal against Loyalists.

With its largely Loyalist work force, Harland and Wolff had never gained much favour in the eyes of Labour politicians. The slightly less than socialist ethos of its former managing director, Iver Hoppe, did nothing to alter this. When Mr Hoppe was forced to resign in 1974, it was discovered that his salary had been paid into a Swiss bank account and his weekly perks reportedly included a £4-a-week haircut, a fringe benefit made all the more poignant by the fact that Mr Hoppe was almost bald. Since its nationalisation in March of 1975, however, the yard has still not been given Westminster's full confidence. The workers there, who include Harry Murray, the teetotal Presbyterian who chaired the Belfast UWC in 1974, found to their consternation that Harland and Wolff was going to be left out of the shipbuilding nationalisation Bill. Control of the 10,000 workers, in other words, would remain with the Northern Ireland Office, thence with whatever local administration was set up in Ulster.

The Standard Telephone and Cables factory in Larne is much smaller than the shipyard and a few of its work force of 760 can probably be employed at the firm's other factory in the Belfast suburb of Monkstown. Yet during the UWC strike men and women from STC helped physically to seal off Larne from the rest of Ulster. It was, in fact, one of the first industries to close down during the stoppage. The Government has offered no inducement to STC to maintain its Larne factory and the Department of Commerce at Stormont – challenged over Mr Orme's alleged unwillingness to assist the company – said STC had made no application for financial help. STC then issued a statement, saying: 'It

was made perfectly clear that no application for assistance by STC would be entertained by the Government and there was therefore no point in submitting a formal request.'

Rolls-Royce's bright and modern machine-shop down at Dundonald is to be closed under the company's recently announced rationalisation plans. Jim Smyth, the UWC leader who personally announced the strike sanctions against the British Government and the Faulkner executive in 1974 over the local BBC radio, works there and it has been a seat of militant Loyalism since.

Only a few days after the Rolls announcement at the end of last December, Mr Orme did apparently try to help the firm. He asked the profit-making Shorts company in Belfast – makers of missiles and transport aircraft – to see if they might take over the Rolls workshop. Rolls were manufacturing aero-engine parts but the Shorts' executives were stunned by Orme's request because, with the exception of a little recruiting from Rolls to alleviate the crisis at Dundonald, they had assumed the Government knew that the Rolls factory would have been of no use to them: indeed it would only duplicate their own machinery. Sir Kenneth Keith, the Rolls-Royce chairman, visited Dundonald recently and denied that the closure was politically inspired. He did, however, meet the leader of the newly formed workers' action committee at the factory who want to safeguard their employment – Jim Smyth of the UWC.

The Government, it is true, can only help a firm to maintain employment in Northern Ireland if it has the prospect of eventual viability. STC is suffering from the national decline in demand for telecommunications equipment; Rolls-Royce's closure in Northern Ireland is dwarfed by the 6,000 Rolls redundancies in other parts of the United Kingdom (notably Barnoldswick in Yorkshire); and there is no reason why Ulster, in spite of its 56,000 unemployed (9.3 per cent female unemployment and 11 per cent male unemployment) should avoid the problems of the country to which it claims allegiance, however curiously that allegiance is expressed.

Yet Protestants are unlikely to see such events as apolitical. Ironically, the UWC's own suspicions of the Government's activities are outweighed by those of the Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party. Paddy Devlin, who was Minister of Health and Social Services in Faulkner's executive, has said that the British are deliberately letting Loyalist firms go under.

No one knows the effect this might have on working-class Protestants, although even in the electricity power-stations – which literally generated the strike – there has been a shift of UWC power. Billy Kelly, the strike leader in the Belfast East power station is now out of favour with his men – there is a profusion of Marxist literature at the Ballylumford station, the largest power plant in Northern Ireland – although this has not been published in the press and is apparently unknown to the British Government. In any event, the UWC and their colleagues must be envisaging shadows over their livelihood even more sinister than the looming shape of the liner *Titanic* in Welch's sepia photograph of 1911.

Belfast

The Oil Rush – 3

Mervyn Jones

Life at the Big Hole

From Inverness, the nearest sizeable town, it takes four hours of driving on narrow roads to reach Loch Kishorn and watch the building of an oil production platform which will one day stand like an artificial island in the North Sea. The roads are in fact impossible for heavy traffic, and all supplies – including vast quantities of cement, for it's a concrete platform they are building at this site – come by rail to Strome Ferry and then make a two-hour sea journey by barge. Loch Kishorn, not a lake but an arm of the sea, is an inlet of Loch Carron, and Loch Carron is itself a wide fjord set among the mountains of Wester Ross, the wildest and emptiest countryside in Europe with the exception of Lapland. The territory behind Loch Kishorn is still described on the map as Applecross Forest, but the forest was long ago cut down by landlords to make grouse moors. Here, the Highland clearances were carried out with utter ruthlessness, an economy of peasant farming was destroyed, and the populations of entire villages were driven to find new homes in Canada. In 1840 the sprawling county of Ross and Cromarty had a population of 85,000, almost all crofters. Today it is 65,000 – it has been lower – and is mostly concentrated in the towns of the Cromarty coast, leaving Wester Ross a virtual wilderness. Nothing like the platform-construction site has ever happened here before, or was ever dreamed of.

The original idea was to locate the site at Drumbuie, a village on the southern shore of Loch Carron, more or less facing Loch Kishorn. The Scottish National Trust protested vigorously, and after a public inquiry and the customary lengthy controversy, the project was vetoed. This resulted in two platforms being built in Norway, at a cost of £110m. to Britain's balance of payments. Then, apparently considering that the conservation lobby ought to win one round and the construction industry the next, the Government agreed to Loch Kishorn. Many people, including lovers of Highland scenery, think that this site is more 'destructive of amenity' than Drumbuie would have been; certainly it's more open to view. The whole affair seems to have been a real old planning muddle.

Looking across Loch Kishorn at the construction site, you see what would undoubtedly be an eyesore in the trim, civilised setting of southern England. Here, the huge scale of the landscape reduces it to minor proportions. On a misty day – and there are plenty of misty days – you could easily miss seeing it. Under a clear sky, the mountain called Coir Each looks down impassively. It is broad and rounded like the head of a Highland bull, and the horizontal outcrops of grey rock seem to be lines of rumination; if one may personify a mountain (I became very fond of Coir Each) it makes an impression of immense age,

dignity and wisdom. The man-made cliff-side of the cavity where the platform is being built reaches a height of 150 feet – but Coir Each rises to 2,500. If I lived here, I thought, I'd object to the construction site chiefly because of the noise. Concrete-mixers, cranes, bulldozers, heavy lorries and pumps throb and groan all day and all night, and the sound travels easily across the water to the villages on the southern shore of Loch Carron. But, visually, the offence is diminished to an incident.

The construction firm of Howard-Doris is one of those international mergers common in the oil business. Howard (the Sir John Howard Group) is a heavy construction company specialising hitherto in building docks, and is responsible for seeing the project through; Doris is a French firm and its contribution is the design. The work in hand is a platform for the Ninian oilfield, up north on a latitude with the Shetlands. The tow will be a long one, 875 miles, and it will be essential to meet the target date of May 1977.

We start with a visit to Strome Ferry. Its origins are obvious, since the loch is here at its narrowest point, but the ferry was closed several years ago for want of traffic. The village, missed by the main road and huddled at the foot of a pine-covered mountain, is tiny: a dozen houses, two churches, the sturdy old station, and the dignified Strome Ferry Hotel, which until recently must have been (as an Israeli once said to me of Jericho) the ideal place to re-read *War and Peace*. At the end of 1974, Howard-Doris moved in.

The hotel is now full the year round, a home for Howard-Doris staff. The exiguous area of flat land has been increased by reclamation from the loch; jetties and breakwaters have been built; Howard-Doris shunting engines fuss busily along new tracks and sidings. As a vital supply point, Strome Ferry handles anything needed at the construction site from nuts and bolts to food. But its main function is to handle the cement for which the concrete platform has an inexhaustible thirst. Arriving in British Rail tip-up trucks, the cement is fed into four (there will be six) tall silos, and then piped into horizontal containers – silos lying on their sides – which are linked to make an unwieldy but practical barge. Under huge arc-lights, work goes on far into the night. A man who takes a job here can expect to work ten hours a day, seven days a week. It may be 15 hours, the foreman says – if a train comes along, it's got to be unloaded.

We push on to the construction site, taking the winding road by the head of Loch Carron and then the head of Loch Kishorn – a distance of 24 miles, compared to six as the barge chugs. After following the shore of Loch Carron, we cross the

little Kishorn river by a picturesque stone bridge. The public road to Shildaig vanishes into the mountains – it's the highest road in Britain – and for the last two miles (along the shore) we use the new road built by Howard-Doris. When we park the car, we're in the midst of a major industrial establishment. It takes half an hour to do a quick preliminary walk round.

The centrepiece is the great circular pit where the platform is being built, known to everyone as The Hole. On the landward side it is framed by a considerable cliff, hung with wire mesh to stop rocks from falling. On the sea-front side there's an earthen wall – the bund, they call it – which took weeks to make. A concrete platform has to be built in two stages, occupying about ten months each. Stage One happens in the Hole; the platform gets its floor and rises to a height of 17 metres. Then it's floated out to the deep water of the loch, and during Stage Two it progresses to its ultimate height of 170 metres. (For 'height' read 'depth', once it is sunk into the North Sea; only 31 metres will be above sea-level.) Ideally, the Hole should be enclosed by a lock-gate, like the gate of a dock, to be opened when the time for floating out comes. But at Loch Kishorn the work had to be started without this refinement, so the laboriously built bund will have to be destroyed after serving its purpose.

Above the Hole, on an artificial plateau, there are concrete-mixers, a generator building, engineering workshops, and stores. The site has no main services and is completely self-sufficient for electricity – the generator supplies enough for a small town, because much of the work will be done after dark – as well as water and sewage. On one side you see the office buildings for managers and draughtsmen, on the other the living quarters for a projected total of 850 (at the time of our visit, 300) men.

It is the morning of 8 August, 1975. Incredibly, on New Year's Day there was absolutely nothing here – nothing but the meditative presence of Coir Each and a hillside descending to the rocky coast. A manager tells me that in the early days he had a two-mile walk (in the dark, of course) every morning and evening. Work on the platform started in July. Getting the Hole dug in six months was a remarkable feat, for it normally takes a year to dig the foundations of a large office building. But the preparation of the site has overlapped with the starting of the platform; roadways and workshops are still under construction, and Howard-Doris workers mingle with the employees of various contracting firms, living in caravans strung out along the approach road. To comply with Scots law, the bar on the site is closed to the contractors' men at ten o'clock, whereas Howard-

Doris men are classed as residents and can drink until midnight.

The atmosphere doesn't seem to be one of unrelenting toil. As we wander round, workers stop to explain what they're doing, or to chat and ask us questions, without being rebuked by foremen; and there are inevitable delays as they wait for materials. Nevertheless, everyone is conscious of working under pressure. It is Loch Kishorn's first platform, snags are bound to arise, and completion by the target date is by no means a certainty. There are rival sites, after all. If the platform isn't ready on time, there may not be another order; this is the real sanction.

Normally, everyone works a 75-hour week – 12 hours a day from Monday to Friday, seven and a half on Saturdays and Sundays. Of course, under British law there is no compulsory overtime. Workers as well as managers assure me that a man can knock off after eight hours' work if he chooses; it's arranged informally in each little team. The management relies on the desire for overtime and bonus money, plus the obvious fact that a man who stops work has nothing to do except lie on his bed or wander about the wild countryside. But what would happen if a man persistently stuck to the legal 40-hour week? An executive said drily: 'His lack of enthusiasm would be noted.'

Very few of the workers are local men and able to live at home, though by chance I run across one from Applecross, 12 miles away. About half of them come from the Highlands – quite a contingent from Ullapool, a town long plagued by unemployment and lack of opportunity. The rest are from 'southern Scotland' (a term which, from this viewpoint, includes the Clyde and the central belt) or from anywhere in England, Wales and Ireland. Workers whose homes are within reasonable distance take weekends, or just Sundays, off. It's more usual to take a long weekend (Thursday night to Tuesday morning) once a month. There's a type of man who has settled, years ago, for living in work camps, working heavy overtime, and seeing his family only intermittently. He'll work on building a motorway, a bridge, a power station; completion of the project will be followed by a 'break', something between a rest and unemployment, until the next one turns up. Loch Kishorn is a project like any other. But it's a good job, most of them say, and they'll be glad if that second order comes along.

To begin with, there was no trade union. However, as the labour force settled into a community, men with union experience got the site organised, meeting little or no resistance from management. Most of the workers now belong to UCATT, the construction union; indeed, some are under the impression that the site is a closed shop, though this isn't strictly true. Industrial relations seem to be cosy, with a desire on both sides to avoid conflict and make the project a success. Frank Routledge, the senior shop steward, is evidently on good terms with Don Findlay, the site manager. 'Mr Findlay is a real gentleman,' he tells me earnestly.

The basic rate is 95 pence an hour.

Negotiations have added a site allowance for the unpleasant outdoor conditions and a bonus system. A man who works the customary long hours will gross £150 a week. Clearly, £150 for 75 hours is better than the pay on the rigs, at £120 for 84 hours – and these men are earning the year round, with a right to their basic pay during three weeks' annual holiday. Most of them, I gather from random conversations, are well satisfied. A few tell me that it's not enough, conditions are better at other sites, they're forced to keep working in driving rain when they ought to be able to knock off and get paid for 'wet time'. When I quote this to Routledge he says: 'I know that little lot. Trouble-makers.' To his mind, evidently, they are disrupting the harmony of Loch Kishorn.

A man with wide experience of construction work takes a balanced view. 'You can always push the wages up on a job like this if the management can't afford interruptions and if you've got real cunning shop stewards. I was on the Shell refinery at Birkenhead. You could pull in 300 nicker without even working hard. It was done by theoretical hours, going by the amount of concrete that got spread. I've chalked up 200 hours a week – theoretical, mind. The shop stewards here aren't up to all the tricks. Still, they're good lads, they're learning. I've got a wife and two kids, I'm sending home 100 a week after tax. I'm not grumbling.'

Planning permission for the site was based on the number of men to be em-

ployed, which governed the acreage used. Howard-Doris's application stated a workforce of 400. Within six months this had (with the inclusion of contractors' men) been exceeded. Critics say that the company was pulling a fast one; the Howard-Doris version is that the platform they were asked to build, and therefore the dimensions of the Hole, were bigger than they'd expected. Anyway, the permitted workforce has now been raised to 850. Faced with the demands of the oil boom, a mere planning officer in Wester Ross had no option.

The project begins with the construction of the base of the platform. First the steel skirts, to ensure stability at sea, are put in. Then the timber support, a job for joiners and carpenters; it will be left behind, of course, when the platform is moved. Then the base itself – 17,000 cubic metres of concrete, with steel strengthening. It's marked out in sections, and at this early stage the Hole looks curiously like an archaeological dig, especially when you gaze down from the top of the cliff. Surveyors are sighting from triangulators, some men are fixing tapes to indicate the sections, others are making walk-ways with planks, and others crouch on the ground, smoothing the cement with trowels. When the site is in final shape the cement will be piped from the silos, but I saw it being brought in mixer-lorries, lurching down a rocky track which bulldozers were still trying to smooth.

Once the base is completed, work will start on the uprights, enclosed in wooden

DECISION: OIL

Final programme in Granada Television's series showing the decision-makers at work in government and industry. Occidental Petroleum considers whether or not to proceed with a marginal field in the North Sea – a decision with many millions of pounds at stake. The events are seen as they happened without any staging or rehearsal.

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GRANADA TELEVISION



London Diary

□ I last saw Jeremy Thorpe at Thames TV's anniversary party for *This Week* at the end of November. It seemed to me even then that he was not quite his normal ebullient self: he made, as always, an excellent speech but seemed somehow preoccupied and in strangely *piano* form when he mingled with the rest of us afterwards. I've always had a soft spot for him, though – and there is no greater hypocrisy than for the Liberal Party now to pretend that the question mark hanging over his leadership has always been on political grounds. Like what? Like the fact that he inherited a party which in 1966 had attained fewer than 2.5 million votes and seven years later managed to more than double it in two separate elections? Like the fact that he has been in every way demonstrably more successful than his disillusioned and discredited predecessor, Jo Grimond, whose own role in recent developments does not seem to have been entirely that of a loyal colleague? My own feelings are very much the same as those of Ruth Addison, the former chairman of the Young Liberals. I wish, at least on the matter of the personal allegation, that Jeremy had had the courage to tell the rest of us to mind our own business. And I wish even more that at least some prominent Liberal had shown a tithe of the grace and generosity that Iain Macleod displayed, in rather different circumstances, when at the height of the hounding of Jack and Valerie Profumo in 1963 he simply said: 'Jack and Valerie Profumo were, and are, friends of mine.' I could have done with that, rather than Cyril Smith wobbling his jowls at me, this week.

□ 'Two cheers,' said Jeremy Potter in his stimulating lecture at the Royal Society of Arts last Wednesday, 'for the British mass media.' This week I'd be more inclined to give one – but I'd readily concede he made a persuasive (and provocative) case. Certainly he carried me with him in his vigorous assault on the notion of a state subsidy for national papers. My own belief remains that there is, as Jeremy Potter put it, no case for 'embalming fluid to be pumped into the press'. Not that Jeremy Potter spared television either. Having watched Diana Rigg on both Saturday and Sunday of last weekend – and Malcolm Muggeridge on Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday – I was particularly taken by his sharp questioning of who selects 'the mass communicator'. I have no idea who's responsible for the BBC's scheduling at the moment but if I were Ian Trethowan I think I'd start to inquire. Not, I suppose that he will. The one sentence in Potter's hour-long lecture which drew from me not one nor two but three full-throated cheers came when he characterised the BBC's attitude as one of 'impenetrable self-righteousness'.

□ I write that with some feeling because only last week I heard from one of our NS Weekend Competitors (indeed the winner of last week's competition) a story that I still find almost incredible. Mr Gerry Hamill

some months ago entered for the *Sunday Times* sporting ballad competition. There were some 500 entries and he did not on this occasion win a prize. He thought no more about it until one Thursday a fortnight ago when, doing no harm to anyone, he happened to hear his own ballad being sung on *Nationwide*. He immediately complained to the *Sunday Times* and got instantly back from them a letter of contrite apology offering to take up the matter on his behalf with *Nationwide*. How different was his experience with the BBC! Having written to them, and heard nothing, he waited a week before going to protest in person – only to be peremptorily told by a covey of commissionaires and security men that if he wanted to speak to anyone at the TV Centre he would have to go to a public call box and ring up from there. This he meekly did and was eventually permitted to speak to the duty officer, who suggested that his best remedy was to go and present himself at Lime Grove (where *Nationwide* is actually produced). Here his treatment was slightly better: a secretary in the *Nationwide* office actually consented to speak to him on the receptionist's internal telephone. But the secretary, alas, knew nothing about the whole matter and asked him to ring back in the afternoon when she should know more. He did and she didn't. Still, the next day the deputy editor of the programme did ring Mr Hamill at home and explained that he ought to have received a telegram from the BBC before his ballad went out on the air. It hadn't arrived? Oh dear. Never mind, the copy-right department would be on to him shortly. Mr Hamill is still waiting to hear from them – and is meanwhile wryly reflecting on the way in which *Nationwide*'s consumer unit constantly urges its viewers to stand up for their rights.

□ I would not wish to give the impression of being obsessed by the BBC but there is one other question I want to ask. This week our distinguished contemporary, the *TLS*, raises its cover price from 15p to 18p – meaning that of all the general weekly papers only the *Listener* is still left selling at a price (15p) most of us were forced to depart from well over a year ago: the *Economist* sells at 40p, *Punch* and *Time Out* at 25p and the *Spectator* and *New Society* (in common with the NS) at 20p. Good luck, then to the *Listener*? Well, hardly. Not only is the BBC currently wringing its hands over an impending deficit of £30m.; even its publications division showed a substantial loss for 1974-5 following on another one in the year before that. How, then, does it justify this kind of loss-leader trading? Don't ask me; ask the BBC – and don't be surprised if you get a distinctly dusty answer. One thing, it occurs to me, that MPs might justifiably ask, and demand to be told, before agreeing to the BBC's next licence fee application is just how much money the *Listener* is currently losing. If we're to have even a segment of the press subsidised by public funds, wouldn't it be better if it was all out in the open rather than concealed under a bureaucratic blanket?

□ Why has Pat Moynihan left his US ambassadorship at the UN? I am sure there

are any number of reasons – though I doubt if Lord Caradon's attack on him in last week's NS (carefully recalled by the *Guardian* in announcing his resignation on Tuesday) was one of them. No, if I had to choose the root cause, I think I'd go for nothing more dramatic than the strict rules that Harvard University follows in the matter of tenure for its staff. Ken Galbraith rushed back from India in 1963 just in time to save his professorship; Arthur Schlesinger Jr and Walt Rostow were both more reckless and less lucky – the former now teaches at the City University of New York and the latter (poor fellow) at the University of Texas in Austin. Which raises an interesting question on this side of the Atlantic. By my count Dr Bernard Donoghue ('Senior Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister', as he puts it in *Who's Who*) will next month have completed two years' leave of absence from the London School of Economics. Which, I wonder, is he going to sacrifice – his senior lectureship at the LSE or his visiting lectureship in Downing Street? Or is British academia so unfamiliar with the world of affairs, and so susceptible to its seduction, that it follows much more relaxed and indulgent rules?

□ Is nothing sacred in the advertising world these days? It's bad enough – as well as plain silly – to imply in TV commercials that cigars, sweets etc. of the right brand are the key to unimaginable sexual success, or even that a box of Whatsit's cornflakes will feed a whole rectoryful of monks. But I can't help feeling that the exploitation of the current nostalgia kick has reached a new low with that beer ad in which World War I Tommies are seen queueing up for their Worthington E to the strains of 'Don't cryee, don't sighee, wipe the tear . . .' Whatever those gallant wretches died for, it wasn't Worthington E, a very pale post-World War II substitute for the real old Worthington, as any member of Camra will confirm. Oh, what an ugly advertising war!

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ But at a time when politicians are less and less able to provide any portion of what the electorate would like to hear from them, the right-wing boom of Rhodes Boyson comes to many conservative ears as the sweetest of harmonies. Three weeks ago he missed a family funeral to vote for capital punishment in the House of Commons. – *Evening Standard* (M. D. Motz)

□ A youth who stabbed a man in the face with a piece of broken glass was sent to a detention centre for three months at Durham Crown court yesterday. And after sentencing him, Judge Alistair Sharp told the teenager to use his fists and fight like an Englishman in future. – *Northern Echo* (Elizabeth Manning)

□ The North Thames Gas Board's first foray into the calendar business has not gone well – September had 31 days and December only 30. The board have now withdrawn them from sale. – *Evening Standard* (Meir Persoff)

Martin Amis

Problem City

Understandably, perhaps, the word on everybody's lips in New York these days is the word 'problem'. Which isn't to say that the various cataclysms facing the Five Boroughs have in any way concentrated the minds of its citizenry: the things people like to talk about remain as assorted and idiosyncratic as ever. The entirely self-induced bankruptcy problem, for instance (free university education, a hospital on every corner), has so far affected only those already nursing a bread-line problem, who face such hardships as the closure of the Day Schools. True, the roads are everywhere so lumpy that it is impossible to avoid hourly ablutions of slush – both from the furious Negro bus-drivers who booming traverse the city, and from the under-employed cabbies who squirt to a halt beside you if you so much as raise a finger to wipe your nose. But the Armageddon problem barely figures; it is safely drowned by the talk of weight, drink, erection, career and children problems which fills the subways, buses and bars.

'I have a neck problem, David,' said a guest on a health-problem chat-show, attributing this complaint to the daily four hours of traction he was getting for his back problem. 'I used to have a sticking problem,' said a TV-ad representative for Freedent, confiding that regular gum regularly gummed up his dental work. I heard the word so many times that I soon developed a problem problem. During my fortnight stay, though, it was only the recent peeing problem – Manhattaners, particularly cabbies, have taken to cooling their bladders in public – which afflicted the city on anything like a metropolitan scale.

And yet to the outsider certain problems do emerge as ubiquitous – communications, for example. I was struck by how wonderfully simplified life became if one observed the many signs, notices and directives tacked up all over the city. On the intersections you are told when to WALK and when to DON'T WALK (the latter often reinterpreted by me, in my Anglo angst, as RUN, or simply STAY INDOORS!). On the buses you are usefully reminded NOT TO CREATE AN UNSANITARY CONDITION. In the passage of my hotel I received the twice-daily caution, NO SMOKING – *This Means You*; 'Who, me?' I used to think, megging my giant Pall Mall (of which I smoked about a carton a day, such was my nicotine problem out there). LITTERING IS FILTHY AND SELFISH SO DON'T DO IT say signs on midtown lamp-posts, debriefing any would-be litterer who might have thought that the habit was a fastidious and altruistic one. In bars, You Have To Be At Least 18 AND PROVE IT to get served intoxicating liquors – so if you're 80, and can't prove it, you're out on your ear.

This diet of italics and capitals had clearly formed the responses of my fellow-viewers at a showing of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Milos Forman's adaptation of the Ken Kesey novel about a scapegrace Irishman in

a Fifties mental home. The film was in any case so crude in its sympathies that the actors might just as well have worn T-shirts with things like SUPPRESSION or VITALITY or HUBRIS stamped across their chests. When the lovable McMurphy (Jack Nicholson, playing direct to this vociferous gallery) organised a life-enhancing, rule-free basketball game for the inmates, the audience leapt up like Harlem Globetrotters in delirious applause; when the wicked Nurse Ratched cruised down the ward, flanked by her sadistic attendants, the audience shrank back in their seats with venomous hisses.

The mob-mentality problem was most frankly revealed, perhaps, at the film's climax: annoyed beyond endurance by Nurse Ratched, McMurphy has grabbed her by the throat; as they wrestled violently on the floor a steady chant of 'Kill! Kill! KILL!' rattled the stalls. Some New Yorkers told me that such an audience reaction was virtually unknown; others told me that, on the contrary, it was almost invariable. At any rate, it reminded me of nothing so much as my own turbulent visits, at the age of eight or nine, to the Saturday-morning pictures in Swansea.

The latest thing on the decadence circuit offers far more harrowing forms of cinematic credulity. Strictly for home viewing, they are called 'snuff movies' and they go something like this: a prostitute or some other rootless unfortunate is invited to join in the making of a sex film; all goes normally until the start of the usual sado-masochistic section, at which point the actors don masks and bind fast the girl; then they kill her, for real. Certain people have questioned the feasibility of distributing such films, but, surely, with the backing of organised crime they could all too easily reach the home projectors of the rich and bored. What no one has questioned is that there is plenty of demand for these curios and plenty of people ready to supply them: indeed, it is a totally logical subversion of the old catchphrase about pleasure being fine so long as it brings no one any harm. Worse is expected to come, with greater stress laid on the moment of sudden comprehension and panic for the victim, who until then just thought she was getting into movies.

The New York gullibility problem is, as a rule, both endearing and comic, and probably its most side-splitting manifestation can be seen at the Whitney Museum of American Art, a two-tier exhibition of the sculpture of Mr Mark di Suvero. Di Suvero – twice described in my hearing as 'one of the very best of the Constructivists' – is something of a New York institution these days, 12 Di Suveros being littered about public places in Manhattan and the Boroughs. His 'installations', as they are called, are put together with the help of a squad of fellow Constructivists, a blow-torch, a pulley and a crane. Downstairs at the Whitney, two vast colour TV sets showed stills of Di Suvero

installing his five-girder work, 'Praise for Elohim Adonai', outside the Segrin building in midtown Manhattan. An unsmiling, gingery figure in jump-suit, sneakers and construction-worker's red tin hat, Di Suvero could be seen with spanner and oxy-acetylene burner, gesturing grandly at his co-installers or chatting hiply to admiring youngsters who had gathered at the scene.

The resulting *objet*, which I later went along to admire, turned out to be a spastic wigwam of metal planks and chopped-up telephone poles, with a triangular bit at the top which swung round in the wind. Who said that the least you could ask of a sculpture was that it stayed in one place? Passers-by stared with interest at the work they had paid taxes to help install, but I suspected they were feeling the itch of bewilderment rather than the handclasp of art. The next day I was gratified to learn that Di Suveros were the frequent cause of mild injury to children, who kept mistaking them for avant-garde jungle-gyms. Perhaps each one should bear a sign saying, DANGER: WORK OF ART PROBLEM AHEAD.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

I Liked Ike

The late, alas, Maurice Bowra – and how one misses that ebullient, generous, warm, witty and hilarious fellow – used to insist that there existed a City firm of solicitors called Mann, Rogers and Greaves: the history of the world in a nutshell. Readers of the NS are no strangers to oddities connected with names. Literary competitors, ever keen to earn an honest guinea or two, have often pored over the London telephone directories in search of unusual surnames and have come up with plum after plum: Trampleasure, Flabelli, Nockles, Ponking, Podgee, Butterfant, Kindlysides, Cram and Jelly. And I am not dreaming it when I say that I once saw, on a railway carriage at Waterloo, a notice which said: 'This compartment is reserved for Jeremiah Worms, Margaret Thing and Major Cake.'

However, the names that occurred in one's ordinary workaday world were straightforward indeed and I never thought that I would ever come into the orbit of a man called Milton W. Buffington, or that in time I should come to call him, in my friendly way, 'Milt'. He was, of course, American, and it was wartime. 'Then the soldier,' says the Bard, describing our seven stages of gradual disintegration, 'full of strange oaths' and, apparently, seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth. Neither in character nor in physique was I what could be called a natural soldier and my strange oaths tended to be such things as 'Golly!' and 'Goodness gracious me!'

I do not do *petit point* embroidery but I had heard that the actor, Ernest Thesiger,

had got away with this pleasant and decorative pastime in front-line trenches during the first world war. (In old age he was once approached by an agitated female fan who gazed into his face and said anxiously: 'Usedn't you to be Ernest Thesiger?'). One wondered a little bit, on being called up, how one was going to fit in. 'It's such a bother when people don't fit in' Edith Evans used to say in a splendidly upper-crust voice in a Farjeon sketch.

It was a happy relief to discover that the army was full of people as ill suited to it as I. Quite early on, and on a very dark and cold night in camp near Aldershot, I heard a sentry being sent out to relieve another. The guard-room sergeant barked orders, a rifle was shouldered, and heavy army boots went clonking off to the perimeter fence. And then, out of the blackness, the sentry who was being relieved spoke. 'My dear, thank God you've arrived! I'm frozen, frozen, frozen!'

My closest brush with the cannon's mouth came from our own side, what in soccer they call 'own goal'. After a noisy unpleasantness called Dunkirk, I found myself at a barracks in Kent where one morning an officer was required to march a platoon of guardsmen to the butts for rifle practice. They scraped the bottom of the barrel and this seemingly simple task was entrusted to me, then masquerading as a lieutenant. Off we set. I had no idea whether it was *de rigueur* to march in front or at the back, so I decided on the former and bravely led the way. Before long, a message came from the rear of the platoon requesting me to take rather longer strides but, apart from that, all was cheerful politeness and I quite enjoyed the little stroll.

Soon the butts came into view. I made, as seemed sensible, straight for them and as we drew near I was surprised by what appeared at first to be a welcoming committee – officers waving flags, people shouting and whistles being blown. On I marched, my men, being guardsmen, following

unflinchingly. Alas, yes, we had marched, an impressive moving target, down the wrong and lethal end of the butts and right among the flying bullets. An officer, a well-named Major Blood, removed me from the platoon and pointed out my little blunder, rather rudely I thought. Nobody, of course, praised our manly bearing or steadiness under fire, and I wasn't allowed to march the men back again – a petty-minded gesture.

But I soon learned a way of coping with ratty senior officers. Usually, the higher they went in rank, the friendlier and cuddlier they were (successful and happy, you see), but with those who hadn't quite made it, one remembered Shaw's dictum: 'All men are children in the nursery.' It didn't need much imagination to picture some red-tabbed and fuming brigadier back in shorts again, with grubby knees and grumpy face, just about to be soundly smacked and sent supperless to bed.

I also, I regret to say, used sometimes, in periods of stress and strain and worry, to look upon the army as a vast girls' school, with dear Miss Alexander as headmistress, and a jolly staff consisting of Gladys Gort, Winifred Wavell and Alice Auchinleck, and with the lacrosse teams doing rather badly until that breezy little Miss Montgomery took over as games mistress. This piece of utter lunacy (apologies to all concerned) helped one to get by.

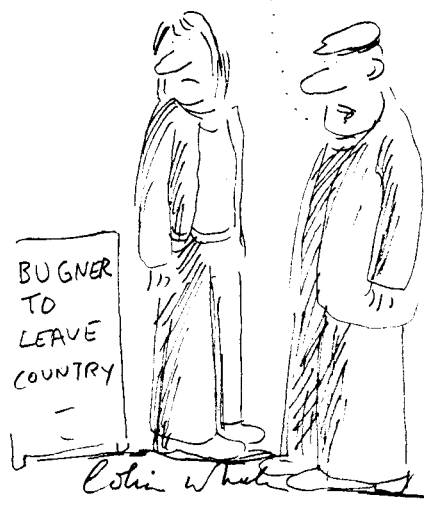
I defied old Gerry and fought a most courageous war with typewriters and pieces of paper and I wound up at the headquarters of SHAEF, fully Anglo-American ('Hi, Milt!') and under the nicest and most modest general of them all, General Eisenhower, about whom I happen to have a little experience to relate. When the buzz-bombs began, we were at Bushy Park in Twickenham, Surrey. The bombs had started flying over us, and some of them had decided not to go on but to stop and rest awhile.

Though many of us there, and especially I, were fully expendable, a wholesale annihilation of the headquarters at that particular time would have been a considerable nuisance and a notice went up, signed by General Eisenhower, saying that when the warning siren went, we were all to take cover in the funk-holes provided, and he added, to encourage us, that he himself would be the first to do so.

One morning the warning went off and I duly plunged down into the nearest underground shelter, as instructed. It was fairly dark but I could just make out another officer there. It was General Eisenhower. We were perched on wooden benches. Nobody else came. No doodle-bug arrived. Silence. Peace. We had been there for about five minutes, when the General spoke. Not a long sentence. 'Well,' he said, 'as long as I keep sitting here, they can't ask me to sign anything.' We then heard a bomb approaching. It passed overhead and shortly after, the engine cut out, there was a pause, and then a distant explosion. Again the General spoke: 'You know, every time I say "Oh Lord, keep that engine going", I feel kinda mean.'

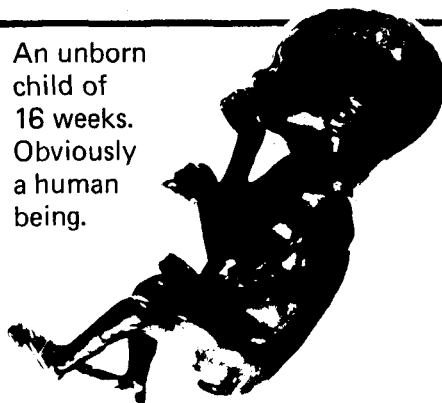
A remarkable man, unlike any other. No wonder we won.

EVEN THE
INLAND REVENUE
BEAT HIM



PUBLIC ENEMY NO.1?

An unborn
child of
16 weeks.
Obviously
a human
being.



You'd think so from the fact that last year 150,000 unborn children were killed in the UK under the 1967 Abortion Act. None was responsible for the poverty, slums, pollution, etc. which 'justified' their destruction. Why did they have to pay with their lives for the shortcomings of our society?

Some were pulled out bit by bit from their mothers' wombs, some sucked out in shreds by machine, others poisoned and delivered dead or removed live from their mothers' bodies and left to die in kidney dishes. All were human beings. Small, defenceless and innocent. But human.

An unwanted pregnancy may seem a disaster. The problems may seem enormous. But a civilised society doesn't solve problems by killing people. It finds a positive solution.

Save the Unborn Child

LIFE is a non-denominational, non-party-political organisation which says there is a positive alternative to abortion and will help any pregnant girl or woman to find it.

Life

35 Kenilworth Rd.,
Leamington Spa.
Warks. 0926-21587

Letters to the Editor

Concorde Reverberations

Sir, Brigid Brophy's review (NS 23 January) of *Concorde* is a fine example of uninformed patriotic effluvia. The American aircraft industry placed (successfully) every pressure on the Nixon Administration for funds to support production of an American SST. Nixon, *et al.*, fought to subsidise Boeing. This 'national group of capitalists' lost in Congress because of the concern for protection of our environment against noise and blast pollution, as well as against hazard to the upper atmosphere. The air industry told, and still tells, the same black lies that Brophy propagates on behalf of 'socialism'. Boeing, *et al.*, are now fighting for landing rights for Concorde. Such success for Concorde can be used to argue for governmental subsidy of design and production of an American SST.

God willing, we will still be able to prevent Concorde from ever landing in this country, - once again *against* the propaganda of our own aircraft industry, which is all too eager to produce an SST, and of the petroleum industry, which wants to sell gas, Arab or no.

Brophy's political views and misguided nationalism should lead her to live close to Heathrow, where she may enjoy the Concorde phenomenally, as well as intellectually. She may even admire those 90 passengers, whose eagerness to save a little time and whose ability to pay a very high fare has loosed these monstrosities on us. Does the convenience of 180 passengers per day warrant the discomfort and hazard to thousands and then millions? Who are they? Could they be capitalists? Writers? Workers?

WILLIAM S. VERPLANCK

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Sir, Jeremy Bugler's attack on Concorde (NS 30 January) made a welcome antidote to the previous week's bizarre paean from Brigid Brophy (which could well provide a sermon for the Bishop of Kingston to preach, on the perversion of the urge to worship). Bugler should realise, however, that Labour governments' support for the project stems from a prevalent heresy in the Labour movement - the belief that the provision of jobs is an end in itself, irrespective of the social or economic value of their output. Concorde is by no means the only example of the disasters to which this leads; the Chrysler workers at Linwood will be doing their country a service if they succeed in putting themselves on the dole. In the current state of unemployment it is neither popular nor kind to point out such facts as these; but a basic socialist tenet is that production should be for need, and we must avoid further misallocation of our resources.

PHILIP JONES

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Morden, Surrey

Sir, A. Sandeman (Letters 30 January) says that I find decibels an obscure subject and people being deafened a joke. He has invented both statements. (I didn't mention decibels - or deafness.) That doesn't inspire confidence in his other assertions.

If you dislike aeroplanes and their noise, you won't find any international airport a nice place to live near, whether or not Concorde is flying out of it. Enemies of Concorde often imply that, apart from Concorde, Heathrow resembles a country churchyard. Presumably they've never been there.

The sound of Concorde's take-off is loud but comparatively brief. It is also very much more bass than the sound made by any of the other (and more frequent) aircraft using the airport. Responses are individual (a point that enemies of Concorde usually haven't noticed) but, for my part, like many people with a taste for music, I much prefer a bass rumble to a chromatic screech. After a couple of hours on the Heathrow roof garden on Concorde's first day in service, I concluded that, if the anti-noise enthusiasts possessed any sensibility whatever to the *quality* of sound, they would be campaigning to ban the other airliners and replace them all with Concorde.

BRIGID BROPHY

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Sir, I am an English engineer working in the United States and, while my profession excludes me from being labelled anti-technology, I do firmly believe that advancements in technology can only be progressive if they benefit mankind. Under this criterion the SST, while a magnificent example of advanced technology, fails dismally to constitute progress.

The British newspapers unfairly maligned concerned American citizens when they accused them of 'sour grapes'. The Boeing SST failed because a wave of protest swept these United States and struck our Washington legislators where it hurt them most - votes. Even Seattle (home of Boeing Aircraft) came out in favour of cancellation. The ecological facts that caused such an outcry here were available to the British public at the inception of the Concorde but, as so often happens, nationalism and political expediency overcame common sense.

It may be ironic that while being a dedicated Anglophile I am doing all I can to support anti-SST legislation, with the knowledge that any limitation on Concorde landing in the United States will almost certainly lead to more financial difficulties in my homeland. However, if I have learnt anything from my sojourn in California it is that money isn't everything. To paraphrase a great American - 'We have but one life to live'.

PAT CORDEN

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California

Snubbing Select Committees

Sir, Mr Anthony Bevins's conclusion that 'No one cares about [parliamentary Select Committees] any more' (Letters 30 January) is open to question on two counts. First, the phrase 'any more' suggests there were earlier periods when someone did care (a great deal?) about Select Committees. Mr Bevins does not identify such periods and I suggest he could not, unless he wished to refer to 16th and 17th century parliaments. Since those periods, the existence of parliamentary party and cabinet government has prevented establishment of strong and autonomous Select Committees. Nineteenth and 20th century advocates of parliamentary reforms, including Sir Erskine May, Fred Jowett, David Lloyd George, and Harold Laski, all argued for strengthened Select Committees precisely because those that existed were of such little import; however, they were rebuffed by successive governments and procedure committees. It was not until the mid-1960s, when reform-minded MPs and academics had the good fortune to encounter both a receptive procedure committee (Select

Committee on Procedure, 1964-65) and a reform-minded Leader of the House (Richard Crossman, with the apparent backing of the Prime Minister), that Select Committees gained the *possibility* of playing key roles in parliamentary affairs. But the possibility has yet to be fully realised, partly because Select Committees continue to be shackled by governments.

Secondly, Mr Bevins confuses the concepts 'care', 'disdain' (or, alternatively, 'scorn'), and 'fear'. 'Caring' can be either a positive or negative emotion. Mr John Riccardo and Mr Hugh Scanlon may be examples of individuals who do not care about Select Committees, or Parliament, for that matter. Neither Mr Bevins nor I know this for certain. Mr Bevins clearly disdains Select Committees. But this Government, and most of its predecessors, fear - and that means care about - Select Committees, or at least the type of Select Committee Mr Bevins implicitly argues should exist. They fear them because they believe that if they are not carefully controlled Select Committees are threats to the programmes and general stability of governments. Select Committees, almost by definition, aim to be critical. To lessen their possible sting, governments hinder their work or refuse to establish them at all. That the present Government frequently endeavours to reduce the impact of Select Committees may indicate it cares more than most.

The central question Mr Bevins fails to address is to what extent a strong Select Committee system and parliamentary party and cabinet government are compatible in Westminster. Perhaps the forthcoming review of Parliament will shed some needed light.

HARRIS N. MILLER
Research Assistant
House of Commons

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The Men on the Rigs

Sir, Mervyn Jones's account of life on some North Sea drilling rigs (NS 23 January) is interesting, but there are certain gaps in his story that make his rather a partial and incomplete view. Like many laymen he seems to imagine that the only place where there are offshore operations is in Scottish (and Norwegian) waters. He entirely ignores the southern North Sea, where, based chiefly on the port of Yarmouth, offshore drilling began in 1964, and is still going on. At the peak of exploration there were as many rigs here as there are in Scottish waters, and even now, there are over 40 production platforms in operation, producing mainly gas, but also some light oil from which the first North Sea petrol was marketed just a year ago.

Your contributor refers to a 'recent report by a group of Scottish doctors', suggesting among other things helipads at hospitals, and the formation of teams of doctors ready to fly out to oil rigs in emergencies, and he comments that 'it is strange indeed that these proposals haven't been made before'. But they have.

The report to which Mr Jones refers is a report by the Scottish Council of the BMA which recommended that 'there should be a coordination of the procedures and legislation relating the medical aspects of offshore rigs', and suggested a whole series of procedures and services that should be made compulsory.

'It is a remarkable fact,' I was told by a Yarmouth doctor with much experience of offshore work, 'that at no time did the Scottish BMA make any inquiries of doctors working in the southern area about problems encountered and how they were solved, nor did they ask for their comments on the report, for had they done so they would have found that all, and more than, that which they recommended,

have been standard practice in the southern North Sea for nine years'.

Working in cooperation with oil companies, drilling contractors, engineering firms, helicopter companies, the doctors in Norfolk, chiefly at Yarmouth, established an occupational health service for the medical care of men working offshore; established a flying doctor service; got out a major disaster scheme, which has been put into operation, fully or in part, on several occasions. The medical service is based on general practitioners who are available 24 hours a day seven days a week. Not only do doctors fly to rigs and platforms, but they have learnt and frequently rehearse, the practice of winching down to vessels where there is no landing site for helicopters. None of this seems to have been done north of the border. There are also six doctors who have taken the Naval Institute of Diving course so as to be able to deal with diving accidents. These doctors have also formed the Institute of Diving Medicine.

Mr Jones refers to the lack of training of 'medics' (medical orderlies) on rigs. Again, Yarmouth has taken steps. For the last year a medical service company has been in operation which recruits medics (basic qualification SRN, with some experience of casualty work) and trains them with courses in four major hospitals in the UK, followed by a course in 'offshore medicine'. Such men are now responsible for medical care of about 1,000 men working offshore on rigs, barges, ships in the North Sea, both in the UK zone and other zones (including Scottish waters). They have direct access for consultation and advice to doctors in Stavanger, Antwerp, Yarmouth, Teesside, Aberdeen, Peterhead and Lerwick.

It is partly because an effective medical service has been available, and the lives of seriously injured men have been saved, that the accident rate in the southern North Sea has been conspicuously lower than in the Scottish area. The records of the Yarmouth borough coroner show that between 1964 and the present day there were 14 deaths on rigs, platforms, ships and barges working in the southern North Sea. Of these deaths two were from natural causes, and one resulted from a storm-caused accident to an off-duty diver who was going home on leave.

It is quite extraordinary that the Scottish BMA appears not to have known that there was a corpus of experience and practice in the south to which they could have had access. For reform by legislation such as they envisage will take far longer to achieve than the voluntary cooperative efforts of the Norfolk doctors have taken to produce similar, even more comprehensive, results.

R. E. S. WHITE
Local correspondent,
Offshore Services

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Great Yarmouth

Devolution Dilemmas

Sir, Colin Boyd (Letters 30 January) is, like his master, Jim Sillars, playing the Nationalist game. They think, by jumping aboard the band wagon of nationalism with a small 'n', they can corner the traditionally Labour Scots vote that is being wooed and won by the SNP. But they are being too naïve by half. Instead of dreaming about a socialist Scotland they should remember the fate of those German socialists who compromised with Hitler. They are playing with fire.

Let's face it - what is this 'Scots' thing? Who, in fact, gives a damn? Precious few. The priorities among the Scots are the same as anywhere else in Britain - jobs, prices, houses. Devolution in its various permutations comes well down the list in any poll. This is not surprising. The Scots are only nationalists

under the skin. Few have the thing in their hearts where it has to be if it is to mean anything.

What we do have is a recipe for disaster. The aspirations of people in Scotland are being heightened by promises from the SNP that there is a utopia waiting on them with independence. Implicit in the antics of the Sillars faction is the same kind of bribery. When utopia fails to arrive on schedule a lot of people are going to feel cheated - then God help us.

ARCHIE BIRT

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Gourock, Inverclyde

The Reticence of Lord Ryder

Sir, Your trenchant leader last week on the Bewbush affair is somewhat marred by its odd assumption that this 'makes a mockery of the Community Land Act' and 'is a throw-back to the worst excesses of the Heath era'. In fact, of course, the events which are the subject of the present investigation took place precisely in that era - indeed at the height of the 1972 land-price boom - and illustrate clearly the case for the Act.

However, one is more disturbed by your failure to distinguish between the fleecing inherent in the old system of land acquisition for community purposes, because of the need to pay 'development' and not 'existing use' prices, from which Crawley suffered at Bewbush like every other council, and some extraordinary detriment which you seem to suggest that Crawley suffered as a result of such shenanigans as may eventually be established in the courts to have taken place. There was no such special detriment to the town.

The council paid the going price, as vouched by the district valuer, and had no legal or practical alternative but to do so if we were to keep up our programme for housing the New Town's second generation. If there was any sufferer from any goings-on there may have been, it must have been the original vendor, on whose behalf one's sense of justice may be aroused but for whom too many socialist tears need not perhaps be shed.

I hope I am not being unduly sensitive in resenting the too ready assumption by journalists of the metropolitan 'Left' that Labour councillors, who have to fight daily for their electors' interest in a world of sharks, are easily conned or corrupted by the sharks. After all, ours is not the cynicism you rightly deplore that leads to the appointment of capitalists to run potentially socialist institutions.

TONY EDWARDS
Vice-Chairman,
Crawley Borough Council
Development Committee

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Wrong Source

Sir, Your leading article last week is a nicely-wrought piece of rhetoric. It is then a pity that the climactic sentence beginning 'True . . .' is wholly false. The statement *Pecunia non olet* is attributable not to Juvenal but to the admirably brief and sardonic Emperor Vespasian, when charged with meanness for imposing a tax on urine - which was at that time used in quantity for fulling cloth. (Vespasian's other famous saying was equally succinct. While dying in the privy from the effects of an over-powerful laxative, he remarked thoughtfully *vae, puto deus fio*, 'I think I'm becoming a god' - a sceptic to the last.)

SEBASTIAN ROBINSON

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Glasgow

Power to Persons

Sir, If as a sick joke someone published an anthology of the most foolish remarks made by the great orators, not a single statesman, philosopher or preacher would be left on his pedestal. By the same token, if as an exercise in propaganda a Tory decided to write a history of the Labour Party by quoting, out of context, the most withering remarks made by eminent socialists against their own governments; and if the writer threw in for full measure every mistake committed by Labour prime ministers without reference to pressures and circumstances, obviously the Labour movement as a whole could be made to seem ridiculous and ineffectual and the leaders would be caricatured.

By such methods, coupled with much embroidery of the facts, has David Mitchell (NS 30 January) repeatedly sought to belittle the agitation for the feminine ballot and its leaders. Midge Mackenzie and Antonia Rae-burn have attempted, successfully, to counteract the male chauvinism evident, not only in the works of David Mitchell, but too often in those by serious historians.

Dr David Morgan, senior lecturer in politics at Liverpool University, in his *Suffragists and Liberals* - published last year but alas, ignored by the NS - has shown how, but for Lloyd George's entanglement with the Marconi scandal, the Suffragettes might well have won their fight before war broke out in 1913.

It would take too long to refute all the distortions in David Mitchell's sour review. Perhaps one point will suffice to reveal his twisted approach to the subject. He describes Emmeline Pankhurst as a late-Victorian Mary Whitehouse. Among many hitherto unpublished papers in my possession, I have a letter signed by the poet, John Masefield. Mrs Pankhurst had written to thank him for some poems he dedicated to the Suffragettes. He replied on 31 January 1910:

Thank you so much for your kind letter about my verses. I am very glad to think that the women, for whom I wrote the lines, cared, to accept the offering. I have felt so ashamed that the offering has been all these years unmade; but I'll try now to make up for that.

It would be a great pleasure to me to meet you some day. I have been at your side, in spirit, so often, that I feel as though we were not quite strangers as it is.

It is no reflection on Mrs Whitehouse if I doubt whether she receives with her fan-mail letters from leading poets to let her know how often they have been with her 'in spirit'.

JILL CRAIGIE

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Antipodean Example

Sir, I note in your issue of 19 December an apparent debate on the advisability of introducing a system known as the Public Lending Right. We have had such a right in this country since 1973 and I was very pleased as a writer to receive a cheque from the Government just before last Christmas, which although small, was better, as they say, than a kick in the arse.

If there are any writers reading this I would recommend to them that they should get in there and fight as hard as they can for a public lending right in Britain. We all know that the answer is a reform of the tax system but that is not an apocalyptic event but proceeds by a series of small practical reforms of the taxation law. A public lending right is one of the best ways that I know of doing this.

TONY SIMPSON

15 Bruce Avenue
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BOOKS & ARTS

Alasdair MacIntyre

Ought for Ought's Sake

The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century by OWEN CHADWICK Cambridge £6.50

Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society by RAYMOND WILLIAMS *Croome Helm* £5.50 *Fontana* 95p

To set oneself to write a history of intellectual secularisation in the 19th century in 260 pages is to attempt the impossible. To add to this task some consideration of social and especially working-class secularisation is to raise yet other barriers to success. Owen Chadwick's Gifford Lectures were therefore bound to turn out at best a gallant and quixotic enterprise; but the interest of his book derives both from its successes and from its failures. The successes are in some of the separate essays on limited subjects: vivid and accurate sketches of the relationship of Marx and Engels to religion, a fascinating account of Voltaire's changing reputation in the 19th century, a fine discussion of German materialism in the age of those unjustly forgotten thinkers, Vogt, Moleschott and Buchner, and interesting, if compressed, reflections upon 19th-century historians. These separate studies have a great deal in common. Each shows how what are at first sight the same general issues of belief and unbelief arose for each thinker in highly particular intellectual contexts, so that what was at issue for Engels became in fact rather different from what posed problems for John Morley, and what concerned the physiologists was very different from what engaged the attention of the historians. There is a whole cluster of conflicts and confrontations to be separated out and Chadwick's book is immensely helpful in this work of distinction-making.

Yet, as Chadwick himself makes clear, all these episodes are after all part of a single history and it is in trying to say wherein the unity of that history is to be found that Chadwick is at his weakest. The clear focus on this or that person or movement gives way to misty generality. Indeed a first difficulty is to know why some episodes are selected for attention and others are ignored. Consider a few of the omissions: no discussion of the founding of University College London; five lines on Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*; nothing on the life of Robertson Smith; two lines on George Eliot; a bare mention of Schleiermacher, and D. F. Strauss treated only as an author read by Engels; nothing on the changes in the divorce laws; almost nothing on attitudes to death; nothing on the Metaphysical Society.

But it is not just that no principle of selection is clearly apparent; it is also that Chadwick conveys very little of the general intellectual temper of the age. He describes for example how Lord Acton astonished

Odo Russell, the British envoy to the Vatican, with the violence of his antipathy to the Pope's temporal power: 'I pray to God that I may live to see the whole of this Fabric destroyed and the Tiber flow with the blood of the massacred priests.' But we are given no sense of the place of these sentiments in the progress of Acton's general beliefs and attitudes. And this suggests a flaw in Chadwick's method; it suggests that the history of secularisation, as he views it, has been falsely abstracted from a more general history of intellectual change. Lacking that context, the history of secularisation – whatever the principle of selection of a particular historian – would necessarily appear as an oddly assorted series of not fully intelligible episodes. Why is this so?

It is because of a profound aspect of secularisation, which has gone unnoticed not only by Chadwick but also by most of his predecessors, namely that by the 19th century religious problems and conflicts have already lost the centrality which they had two hundred years earlier. They have already become a subordinate, even if still highly important, theme in the history of culture. Theology and preaching become more and more the preoccupation only of fourth-rate minds. Chadwick does not think it significant to notice that the two greatest Christian theologians of the 19th century, Kierkegaard and Newman, wrote and thought *against* the mainstream Christianity which they encountered. They saw all too clearly how a great deal of Christianity itself had become secularised.

But now, it may be protested, it is I who am making the task of the intellectual historian impossible. If the themes of secularisation can be viewed without distortion only in some larger context, then surely the historian of ideas is condemned to a project so vast that inevitably all he can hope to produce is a collection of fragments, of essays upon particular episodes. It would be wrong to dismiss such a protest lightly; but wrong too to accept its implications. Chadwick's book embodies three attitudes which we ought to examine as possible sources of his failure, before we conclude that the vastness of the task ensured the failure of any attempt to write more than a set of discrete essays. The first of these is a disdain for general frameworks in the writing of historical narrative. Bossuet, Gibbon, the Whig historians, Taine, Michelet, Hegel, Marx: the modern academic historian is generally taught to believe that these men arbitrarily imposed speculative philosophical views on the materials of history. The modern, secular, academic liberal is sure that he knows better and Chadwick is at one in this with his secular colleagues. Indeed it is clear that he would

be rather embarrassed by any suggestion that just because he is a Christian theologian his task might be that of writing providential history or any history which differed in any significant way from the history written by non-Christians. Yet it is far from clear that genuine narrative history can be written without presupposing an ideological framework of the kind so distressing to the academic mind. What much academic history presupposes, while pretending to an objectivity freed from speculative philosophy, is in fact the view of the world epitomised in Samuel Beckett's *End Game*. History is a drama without meaning. But this is as speculative a philosophical position as any.

A second respect in which Chadwick should be put to the question concerns his hedging over questions of truth:

The historians of the last hundred years have eschewed, or have looked as though they eschewed, any attempt to answer questions on whether a belief is true, and have directed their endeavour to questions appropriate to their discipline, why belief arose, how it was believed, how its axioms affected society, and in what manner it faded away.

Except of course, most interestingly, historians of natural science. They treat the theorising of Galileo and Newton very differently from the way in which they treat that of Dr John Dee. It is of course far too simple to say that historians of science discriminate beliefs as just true or false; but canons of rationality and of truth are necessarily normative for their view of scientific progress. But if in the history of science, why not elsewhere? The answer is not difficult; outside the natural sciences our culture's acknowledgment of shared values and norms has become shifting and uncertain. But one might have expected from a Christian theologian a slightly more sceptical view of the presuppositions of his own age, as well as of those of the 19th century.

A third source of failure in Chadwick's book is the unsystematic character of some of his inquiries. He makes, for example, interesting but desultory observations about the history of such words as 'secular' and 'enlightenment'. But he never considers the place of those words in a more general change of meaning in key words which is going on throughout the period about which he is writing. The pity is that it is at this level of linguistic change that intellectual and social history fuse. In Chadwick's narrative the connection between them is never made clear, and I do not think that it could be made clear by any historian writing at the level or with the methods which Chadwick employs. But this implies yet another quarrel with the way in which the history of ideas is generally written. What is the alternative?

A brilliant step in the right direction has been taken by Raymond Williams in *Keywords*. Professor Williams has taken 110 words whose developed and changing meaning has been crucial for the whole history of our society and culture: *individual*, *medieval*, *progressive*, *sensibility*, *consumer* and *improve* appear alongside *class*, *socialism* and *alienation*. Put into the kind of perspective which this collection of small-scale studies provides the history of 'secular' and of 'enlightenment' would have acquired a

kind of significance which the conventional approach cannot provide. For it is in the history of such words that the notion of the interplay between their use in more formal intellectual contexts and their use in the mouths and writings of plain people begins to appear. Williams makes good use of the accounts of his words given in the OED, but he expands and deepens that account so that for the first time we have some of the materials for constructing a genuinely historical and a genuinely social semantics.

Seventy-six of Williams's key words are nouns and all the rest but one are adjectives; only one verb, no auxiliary verbs, adverbs or whatever. Moreover a high proportion of the nouns are abstract. It is easy to understand why, and probably at the beginning of such an inquiry there is no alternative. But it is often in the much less obviously changing, much less obviously theoretically charged words that theories and world-views incarnate themselves. Consider a conversation in Trollope's *Is He Popenjoy?* (Trollope was peculiarly sensitive to nuances in contemporary usage):

'I'm quite sure Lord George Germain never in his life did anything that he ought not to do. That's his fault. Don't you like men who do what they ought not to do?'

'No,' said Mary, 'I don't. Everybody always ought to do what they ought to do...'

The last sentence is not a tautology; and behind it lies the whole chequered history of 'ought'. As with 'ought', so also with 'should', 'oblige' and 'act': there are discoveries to be made among the verbs which no study of nouns and adjectives alone will supply.

Secondly, as Williams himself emphasises, there are damaging limitations to any study which restricts itself to one language. The history of so many key words passes through German or French or Arabic as well as English that a history of English uses alone may be partial and even deceptive. English humanists have sometimes lamented that there is no term in English which correctly translates the German *Geisteswissenschaften*; Martin West has even recently and regretfully characterised this kind of use of the word *Wissenschaft* as un-British. But such laments depend on their authors not knowing that the expression *Geisteswissenschaften* was introduced into the German language as a translation of the English expression 'moral sciences' by the German translator of John Stuart Mill. It was until then German and not English that lacked such an expression.

Thirdly, the most difficult and yet the most important task will be that of discovering how to use these linguistic resources to integrate the narratives of intellectual and social history in new ways. Williams is not the only pioneer in this field; such political theorists as Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock have used similar methods with striking originality. But Williams's book is unique in its kind so far and it provides a model as well as a resource for us all. When the lessons that it has to teach have been fully assimilated I have no doubt that the ways in which we write the history of ideas will have been transformed to a degree that it is as yet difficult to imagine.

Fitzroy Maclean

Deaf Titans

The Struggle for Greece 1941-1949 by C. M. WOODHOUSE *Hart-Davis, MacGibbon*
£15.00

I can think of no one half as well qualified as Mr Woodhouse to write a history of the tangled events described in this book. He is fitted for the task both by his wartime and post-war experience, by his knowledge of the country and language, by his academic qualifications and, last but not least, by his skill as a writer. But what is perhaps even more remarkable is the objectivity which he brings to his highly controversial subject. During the war, as Commander of the Allied Military Mission to the Greek guerrillas, he somehow managed to hold a balance between rival resistance movements of the Right and Left, without forfeiting the confidence of either. In his book, he shows the same fairness of mind and readiness to see any given question from more than one point of view as he did then. He has also, quite clearly, gone to infinite pains to establish and assemble the available facts, in this case a far from easy task. The result is a lucid, scrupulously fair and intensely readable account of a fascinating sequence of events which might otherwise have been left unrecorded or have gone down to history in a garbled or incomprehensible form. Nor, as might be supposed, is this a purely academic exercise of limited scope and interest. What happened in Greece between 1941 and 1949 is of great significance historically and has a very definite bearing on much that is happening there and elsewhere today.

Believing that an involvement with one Balkan country was enough for any one person, I must admit that I have never made as much effort as I should have done to inform myself at first hand and in detail about Greek affairs. I thus approached *The Struggle for Greece* with an open, not to say empty mind, only to find myself immediately fascinated by the apparent similarity of the events described to what was happening at the same time across the border in Yugoslavia, but even more by their ultimate dissimilarity.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that what made the biggest difference of all was the absence in wartime Greece of any one leader of Tito's calibre. Also important were differences of character and tradition between Greeks and Yugoslavs and the different ways in which the Allies reacted to what they found (or did not find) in each country. But, whether one likes it or not, (and to a good Marxist at least the idea should in theory if not in practice be repugnant) one finds oneself coming back every time to the direct and decisive influence exercised on the course of events by one man.

Thus in Greece, despite an old-established tradition of national resistance and a deep-seated dislike of the Germans and Italians,

neither left-wing nor right-wing guerrillas seem to have shown any great inclination to engage the enemy until eventually pushed into it by British liaison officers. In Yugoslavia, on the other hand, a vigorous Communist-led resistance movement was in existence by the middle of 1941, which by the end of the war was ready to assume power without further ado. Again, throughout the period covered by this book, the members of the Greek Communist Party were deeply divided among themselves, much as the Yugoslav Party had been before Tito took it in hand.

For these reasons the Greek Communists never achieved during the war the same military or political ascendancy as their Yugoslav neighbours and were never able to deal with the Allies, whether Eastern or Western, from the same position of strength. Nor, for that matter, were the adherents of the Right and Centre any less divided or better organised or able to cut more ice than their left-wing rivals.

The result, as described by Mr Woodhouse, seems to have been a perpetually confused situation, made worse, if anything, by the conflicting policies and private intrigues of the various British authorities supposed to be responsible for promoting resistance in the Balkans. As he himself puts it, with feeling, though with characteristic restraint, 'British policy towards occupied Greece does not command admiration'.

Nor do the Greek Communists seem to have fared better when they turned to the one quarter from which they might have expected sympathy and understanding – Moscow. Stalin had never really liked foreign Communists, whom he regarded as being on the whole more trouble than they were worth. *Lavochka*, the Grocer's Shop, was his name for the Communist International. The Greek Communist Party he disliked more than most, regarding it and the Greek situation in general with what Harold Macmillan has called 'gloomy disinterest'. His criterion in these matters, as Mr Woodhouse rightly points out, was the national interest of the Soviet Union, as he saw it, and a hypothetical Communist revolution in Greece did not come under this heading. The only revolutions he liked were those effected by the bayonets of the Red Army (which was one of the reasons he never really took to Tito). As far as Greece was concerned, he did not believe a revolution was on the cards, giving as his reason the fact that at that time the Soviet Union had no navy. Nor, strange as it may seem, did he want at this juncture to upset Mr Churchill, with whom he had recently done a private deal over Greece.

Considering how the cards were stacked against them, how little encouragement they received from Moscow, their lack of proper leadership and painfully divided councils, one cannot but admit that the Greek Communists showed considerable courage and resilience in their attempts to seize power. In Greece, as in Yugoslavia, simultaneously with the war of resistance, a second war was being fought, a civil war between rival resistance movements for ultimate political power. This came to a head in 1943-44 when the Communists made a first determined but unsuccessful attempt

to crush their rivals. Their second bid for power came in December 1944, after the German withdrawal from Greece. In this they were frustrated by prompt military action on the part of the British, followed by a plebiscite which re-established the monarchy. But the Communists had not given up hope. After what Mr Woodhouse calls 'a bitter truce', lasting from early 1945 to early 1946, a series of isolated clashes and incidents eventually escalated into full-scale civil war. It was to last for more than three years.

At first the Greek Communist forces had the support of their northern neighbours, Albanians, Yugoslavs and Bulgars, who also provided what for guerrillas is an invaluable asset, a friendly hinterland in which to disappear. The Cold War had by now begun. In all the circumstances the Greek Communists not unnaturally hoped for some help from Moscow. 'The great Georgian,' they wrote, 'Titan of Titans, hears our groans.' But the Titan of Titans remained deaf to their appeals. The Greek rebellion, he told a Yugoslav delegation in February 1948, must be 'rolled up' as soon as possible. It had no prospect of success and only annoyed the British and Americans. For the time being the Yugoslavs continued to help, but a few months later came Tito's break with Moscow and not long after he, too, withdrew his support, though not from any wish to oblige Stalin. To all intents and purposes the Greek Communists, still bickering among themselves, were now on their own, much as the Spanish Republicans had been ten years earlier.

Since 1947 the Americans had taken the place of the British as the Greek government's principal allies. Under the Truman doctrine help was given to the National Army on a massive scale. It was a pattern which during the next quarter of a century was to be repeated with varying success in one part of the world or another. In this instance American aid finally tipped the balance and in August 1949 the Greek civil war ended in the utter defeat of the Communist forces.

The casualties during the Civil War were appalling: some 70,000 dead on the Government side and some 38,000 Communists. The material damage, too, was far worse than under the German occupation. Looking back over the years, it is perhaps less surprising than one might have thought that the recent collapse of the right-wing dictatorship in Greece was followed by a return to a form of constitutional government rather than by an immediate swing to the extreme Left. It seems as though the people of Greece have learned, the hard way, to distrust extremes, thus reverting, consciously or unconsciously, to the precepts of their remote forebears.

Among this week's contributors:

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE is currently engaged on a study of the concept of virtue.

FITZROY MACLEAN commanded the British Military Mission to the Yugoslav partisans from 1943 to 1945.

JOHN GRIGG is engaged on a major study of Lloyd George.

LIAM HUDSON is the author of *Human Beings* just published.

Bruce Page

The Jungle Book

Rupert Murdoch: A Business Biography by
SIMON REGAN *Angus & Robertson* £3.80

Proprietor . . . the word has a dated sound. Oil refineries, machine-tool companies and construction firms do not generally have *proprietors* these days. Managers, shareholders, chairmen – yes. But the baronial proprietor is now scarcely found outside the newspaper industry. You can regard that variously: as a sign of the incorrigible neanderthalism of Fleet Street, in which fiery sermons on national regeneration are preached from atop a muck-heap of restrictions, inefficiencies and special exemptions unequalled outside the Inns of Court; or as a demonstration that some potential remains for the maverick individual, even in an age of conformist rationalism.

Newspapers being complex beasts, there can be some validity in either picture. Therefore we must try to decide whether each proprietor, individually, is a Good Thing or a Bad Thing. You may of course say that the whole idea of proprietorship in the means of communication is a bad thing in itself, and I won't disagree. But the phenomenon will be with us for a while yet – and one reason is that those of us who are socialists have yet to produce, for all the brave tries, a really convincing newspaper model of our own.

Simon Regan is offering a trial balance in the case of Rupert Murdoch, who has now been on the British scene for some seven years, and has acquired here a legend just as contradictory as that which attaches to him in Australia. The chief value of the book is that it provides a reasonably detailed account of Murdoch's Australian background – a great service to the English reader, who is normally told that Australia is a far-away country of which we know little; just as the dominant image of the Australian (reinforced by a certain amount of Uncle Tomming on the part of the intellectual diaspora) is that of Barry McKenzie: a kind of chunder-spattered Candide.

No doubt Rupert Murdoch's British success has something to do with the fact that the denizens of the metropolitan culture assessed him initially as some kind of innocent at large. As Mr Regan points out, Murdoch is the product of a tough and far from unsophisticated urban culture. When he arrived in London as a bidder for the *News of the World*, he had already dealt with several boardroom and market-place antagonists rather more ferocious and wily, on their particular scale, than anything to be found in the City or Fleet Street.

He was immediately up against Robert Maxwell of Pergamon Press, celebrated as one of the hardest-hitting local operators. ('I,' said Maxwell once, 'am a jungle man.') Murdoch made the logical move – distinctly ungentlemanly, by the standard of Sixties' go-go capitalism – of attacking the Pergamon share-price. The fact that Pergamon's

share price did turn out to be quite incommensurate with the company's real profitability did not endear Murdoch to a City community which in those days was making a lot of money by the systematic hype-ing of share prices.

Murdoch is a second-generation newspaper boss, but his family interest was ejected from the *Melbourne Herald* group – the creation of his father, Keith Murdoch – by a janissaries' coup which coincided with the death of the elder Murdoch. Just how it happened has never been quite clear, and Mr Regan's account remains ambiguous. But it would be surprising if the episode has not left some mark of bitterness on Rupert, who was scarcely out of university at the time.

Mr Regan makes a fair job of describing how Murdoch reconquered an outlying part of his father's empire and used it as a base to acquire new territories ampler and more exciting than those from which he had been excluded. He is less good at helping us to work out the costs and benefits that Murdoch has brought to journalism.

It is necessary to start with the problem of popular journalism, now coming to something like a crisis-point in this country. For many years the Good People assumed that all was well, because the *Daily Mirror* (though one wouldn't read it oneself) was in the hands of reasonably decent folk who understood the black arts of communicating with the working class. The *Daily Express* was no doubt possessed by a malign goblin, but it didn't matter because all his campaigns were so heavy-handed that they had the opposite effect to the one intended. The Rothermere empire was sinking slowly into decrepitude – but somehow there would always be enough money in the business to preserve a just-credible facsimile of a free and independent popular press (even if most of the Sunday papers, based on the great 19th-century blend of pornography and radicalism, had stuck generally with the pornography and eased off notably on the radicalism).

Financial crisis has changed that complacent picture. Vaulting production costs are bad enough for the 'quality' press and high cover-prices are inevitably bad for circulation. But these difficulties are even greater in the popular market – which serves the majority of the population – where the downward circulation trend is certainly not due to price alone, but to some more comprehensive form of rejection. There now exists the possibility of a popular newspaper market reduced to one or two units, which might well be in some kind of financial bondage to the central government. (Many people believe that government hand-outs are essential to get the industry over the costs of 'new technology'. Can anyone believe, in Harold Wilson's Britain, that aid of that kind really comes without strings?)

Entering the popular daily market, Murdoch produced the famous success of the *Sun* – a brilliant, tightly-controlled business operation, but one which succeeds journalistically by working on the simplest possible level of communication. Almost certainly it is the over-simplification, the intellectual impoverishment of the British popular press which has caused the overall decline of its market: curiously, in such a situation, there

usually exists a tactical opportunity for a newspaper ready to deal in the old simplicities. The *Sun* has achieved an economically viable circulation – and is holding it while everyone else's is declining.

Without doubt, the energetic simplicity of the *Sun* has made life harder for the *Daily Mirror*, which has been trying for some years to evolve a new kind of popular voice. The grave faults which Establishment spokesmen purport to see in Rupert Murdoch's papers – the brash irruptions into the privacies of John Profumo, Lord Lambton and others – need not be regarded too seriously. They were no doubt tasteless, and probably unwise politically at a time when considerable lobbies are trying to procure a privacy law to control the curiosity of reporters. But the serious worry is that Murdoch's commercial daring – in this country at least – has not been paralleled by equally adventurous popular journalism. The social justification of a newspaper lies chiefly in its capacity to evoke fruitful conflict within its society, and in its ability to expand the vocabulary in which it addresses its readers. Too often, the conflicts in which the *Sun* and the *News of the World* figure are fought against essentially trivial opponents. Nearly all the time, the journalistic engineering is just a nicely-polished example of designs that have been around for years. It ought to be possible to revitalise British popular journalism – certainly, it will be a sad thing for our democracy if it cannot be done. So far, there has been little sign of that new vitality coming from the *Sun*.

John Grigg

Action Man

Lloyd George by PETER ROWLAND *Barrie & Jenkins* £8.75

Since Lloyd George died in 1945 there have been at least half a dozen biographies of him, of varying length and merit, as well as a number of books dealing with particular aspects of his life and (recently) several editions of primary source material. Now Peter Rowland has written another account of his whole career, which is not only the most up-to-date but also the fullest and in many ways the best.

Mr Rowland is a civil servant working for the GLC and, although his official duties may leave him the odd moment free for extra-curricular work, we must assume that historical research and authorship are, for him, very largely spare-time activities. Yet he has managed to produce this massive volume on Lloyd George, and before it two volumes on the last Liberal governments, 1905-1915 – a truly remarkable achievement.

As a biographer, his *forte* is straightforward narrative. He knows the story well and tells it well. His acquaintance with the available sources is very extensive, and his style is always lively and clear, if just occasionally a little cheap. Another virtue is that he quotes Lloyd George's own words

as generously as the scale of a one-volume biography permits.

The proportions of the book are on the whole good, although not entirely beyond criticism. The main text runs to 804 pages (of rather small print) and of these 279 are very properly devoted to Lloyd George's career up to 1914. But less than 100 of the 279 deal with his pre-war ministerial phase, 1905-1914, which seems hard to justify – and hard to understand, in view of Mr Rowland's special knowledge of the period. In the section of the book describing the war years it is surely wrong that Lloyd George's work at the Ministry of Munitions is disposed of in eight pages. Such a crucial episode in his life, in the history of the war and in the evolution of British government, deserves more detailed treatment. Finally, Mr Rowland gives more than 200 pages to Lloyd George's life from 1922 to the end, and this seems excessive. After 1931 his career was virtually finished, and it is evident, moreover, that Mr Rowland had to write about the last phase before he could consult Colin Cross's edition of the Sylvester diary or A. J. P. Taylor's edition of Lloyd George's letters to Frances Stevenson.

Mr Rowland is, perhaps, rather less successful as analyst and interpreter than as narrator. Reference to the source notes often suggests that an apparently firm opinion has been based upon dubious authority. There is a certain lack of discrimination in the book, and Mr Rowland is apt to record incidents one after the other without giving sufficient stress to what is really important. For instance, he quotes Lloyd George's speech at Haworth in October 1898, during the Fashoda crisis, but fails to emphasise its originality or to explain its relevance to his later career. Among Mr Rowland's *obiter dicta* some are convincing but others slapdash. It is spoiling a good point to say that 'Lloyd George was essentially a moderating force in the last golden days of Liberal England – an arbitrator and a conciliator, but never an agitator'. In fact he excelled in both capacities, but his paramount motive was always to get things done.

Mr Rowland rightly defines his attitude during the second world war as that of a realist, not that of a defeatist. He felt that we should have to negotiate, but that we should negotiate from a position of invincibility – when it was apparent that we could neither win nor be beaten. And but for Hitler's incredible folly in declaring war on the United States his assessment would probably have been vindicated – although Mr Rowland makes the all too common mistake of saying that Pearl Harbour brought America into 'the war'.

After the death of his first wife in 1941 Lloyd George went downhill fast, and Mr Rowland gives us a moving description of his very last speech, at a children's party in Crickieth, noting that he uttered the few words with 'terrible effort' and suggesting that the version of them which appeared in the local press might well have been 'the outcome of a few minutes' quiet consultation between Sylvester and the reporter'. I can testify that the same must have been true of his last speech in the House of Commons chamber, when he replied to Anthony Eden's congratulations on his eightieth birthday. Mr Rowland quotes the words as reported in *Hansard*, but they are more elaborate and felicitous than the words that I heard listening disappointedly from a seat 'under the Gallery'.

Peter Wilby

What Butler Saw

A Place for Everyone: A History of State Education from the 18th Century to the 1970s by NIGEL MIDDLETON and SOPHIE WEITZMANN *Gollancz* £7.50

Sophie Weitzmann spent nearly twenty years on this history and failed to finish it before her death in 1965. Perhaps she sensed that the story was incomplete. As a significant historical stage of English education draws to a close, this book, authoritative in its handling of complex material, unwavering in its perspective, will serve as an epitaph. It is not just the post-war secondary school selection system that is dying, with a new Education Act about to supersede the 1944 Act; we are also close to the end of a century-old philosophy of schooling.

That philosophy was based on the assumption that two kinds of education were needed: one for the ruling classes, the governors and the managers, the other for the factory hands. This extraordinarily tenacious dual system, that was to struggle on through a century of wars and social upheaval, was entrenched by the 1870 Education Act, with its publicly-financed Board schools and its state-aided but not controlled grammar schools.

The former was to drill into its working-class charges the essentials of reading, writing and number and the virtues of social deference and obedience, before dispatching them at the earliest possible moment to their appointed places in an industrialised

RAGTIME by E. L. DOCTOROW

**LOVE IT OR HATE IT-
EVERYONE'S READING IT...**

M MACMILLAN LONDON

society, while the latter was to introduce its aspiring middle-class charges to the principles of thought embodied in the defunct languages of two ancient Mediterranean slave societies. This class-based, classicist education was rooted in the survival of a powerful landed ruling class into an industrialised, urbanised society. It was one of the chief weapons used to defend this class against the rapid rise of an exceptionally vigorous middle class. It served both as a means of resisting the new class and as a means of socialising it.

The book explains all this with great clarity and goes on to chronicle the dismal tale of how English education, despite successive plans and promises, failed to provide an adequate education for the mass of the adolescent population and, in particular, failed to develop the scientific and technically-based school curriculum that has been widespread on the Continent since the mid-19th century, and was advocated by Adam Smith as long ago as 1776. The Butler Education Act is exposed for what it was: a modest measure of social reform to quieten the Labour elements in the wartime coalition. It was cheaper, more innocuous and less controversial than the complete overhaul of health and welfare foreshadowed by Beveridge:

The 1944 Act was basically a measure repairing a rundown system and it is difficult to find one area of innovation in its many clauses. It originated in a civil service study group which above all aimed at being safe ... Policies were framed to suit the administrators and not for the benefit of the majority of children ... it merely reconstructed the system built up on the 1902 Act.

Predictably, no action was taken on the provisions for day-release to county colleges for under-18s at work, just as the similar provisions of the 1918 Act had remained dormant.

Though Chuter Ede stayed awake till after midnight to greet Easter Sunday 1945, when the Act came into force, 'in order that I might know the moment at which the elementary education system expired', the secondary modern school simply lent the dual system a spurious respectability. Given their historical origins, parity of esteem between the secondary sectors was impossible.

The puzzle that this book does not explore adequately is why the Labour Party failed so abysmally for so long to mount an effective challenge to the dual system. Possibly, because Labour leaders had themselves transcended its constraints, they failed to recognise its social role. Conservatives have always been more alert to the function of education. Edward Wood (later Lord Halifax), who was president of the Board of Education for some four years between the wars, once inquired whether a new school could be built near his family estate in Yorkshire 'to train them up for servants and butlers'. And Middleton and Weitzmann quote a Conservative education report:

a primary duty of national education is to develop a strong sense of national obligation in the individual citizen, to encourage in him an ardent understanding of the state's needs, and to render him capable of serving these needs.

No wonder modern Tories protest so loudly against belated Labour social engineering.

Liam Hudson

Mourning Rights

Death and the Family by LILY PINCUS Faber £4.50

In the territories of death and of the family, where no one speaks with preponderant authority, Lily Pincus's voice is more expert than most. Her work at the Tavistock Institute has given her access to the mechanics of marriage, and from her own personal life she can claim a considerable knowledge of bereavement – of what happens to us when those we love die. Here she draws these two themes together.

Quite explicitly, she wishes to attack the 'general conspiracy' in our polite culture that 'death has not occurred'. She deplores the glossings-over that permit the mourner no transitional *rites de passage* from one condition of life to another. In a society that is explicit to the point of tedium about sex, death is increasingly treated as taboo: as something shocking that occurs off-stage, in old folks' homes and hospitals. Something that with luck the hale need never see – that is, until our own time comes. Yet most of us live much of our lives hag-ridden with fear about the death bed – so scared that we cannot enjoy each other properly while we have the chance. Camus once said: 'There is only one liberty, to come to terms with death – after which anything is possible.' Gallic hyperbole perhaps; but, in essentials, true.

Mrs Pincus's claim is that death is by no means always as fearful as we imagine: that although some deaths are dreadful, others are good, and some (like her husband's)

positively ennobling. She also argues persuasively that if one of a married couple dies, the course the survivor's misery runs will depend on the dynamics of the relationship just brought to an end – on what husband and wife have meant to one another. And that this will depend in its turn on how they were brought up; on what childhood patterns their marriage has enabled them to relive.

Mrs Pincus's frame of reference is psychoanalytic. She sees bereavement as a social worker who has spent many years helping couples repair their marriages. Her assumption is that a marriage is an 'interaction'; and that in the shaping of this interaction two psychic mechanisms are basic: 'projection' and 'identification'. And she launches a theory of bereavement – of how grief strikes us – in terms of two groups of case studies. In the first, she examines the consequences of death in couples whose marriages were based on the mechanism of projection; in the second the consequences in marriages based on identification.

Fortunately, she describes the couples quite fully, and one can form some impression of how they differed. The 'projecting' couples seem to have seen themselves as complementing each other – as separate from one another and different; whereas 'identifying' couples allow the boundary between themselves to dissolve, and treat their relationship as an indivisible entity. Mrs Pincus's observation, if I have understood her correctly, is that bereavement follows a different pattern in the first kind of marriage from the second. In the first, after an initial period of anguish, survivors will experience a new sense of strength – of themselves not broken but enhanced. Conversely, a death in the second kind of marriage will lead to a loss of strength – to a fear that can be held in check only by denial or repression.

Mrs Pincus goes on to offer convincing

Peter Porter

Piero di Cosimo on the Shoalhaven

Through a banksia's cone the fire passes,
Aphorisms of the deities of time:
Here on a broad river's side, my glasses
Squandering the sun, I put rhyme
Into paint, Vulcan's and Venus's trespasses.

On a rock orchid, the roundness and gloze
Of a Lapith's bum! Men hauled cedars
From these forests before their blood froze,
Making a camp for gods – our leaders,
We sighed, as we looked inside the rose.

My eggs boil on the electric stove –
Reincarnation of madness: one
Takes a mainline trip to Comfort Cove,
Another paints the rain forest in the sun,
A murder and a mating in a grove.

Drongo the dog is barking at a thing
Washed up on a sandbank by the tide –
A nymph, a suicide, something decomposing
Which his nose loves, and at its side
The mercenaries of life converging.

Up river the water ski-ers puff and plane;
I could not imagine more blended beasts.
The gods are husbanding our pain
Like all good settlers – the men of feasts
Will come, a Medicean super-strain.

Neither Adam nor Jesus ever laughed
But the serious earth is quite hilarious.
This is Eden as the cattle go past
The electric fence; the faces are so various
Of flower and shadow, which will last?

Only work can save us from night coming.
Newly-planted trees attest the faith.
On its dorsal, a monster is drumming
Messages for the new world – each wraith
Is a spirit of old Europe slumming.

Here I put a duck-billed wallaby,
A swimming jackass, abo-centaur:
So old a place has so much still to see,
There must be ghost traps. Shut the door
On dying, become a lamenting tree.

demonstration that the repression of grief can have harmful long-term effects on the personal lives of the individuals in question. She shows that lives can be warped by a grief that has been summarily buried rather than 'lived through'.

But bereavement is not just a shock; it is a psychic revolution. To put the point rather cold-bloodedly, bereavement, like divorce, is a 'natural experiment' that enables us to see, for the first time, how the marriage which it terminates was constructed. We can discover something about the structural principles on which a marriage was built by studying the aftermath of its destruction. Both divorce and death are times of surprising reversal: the strong can suddenly find themselves helpless, while the weak are sometimes startled by their steely resolve. Some husbands who have treated their wives like dirt begin to idolise them once they are dead; and likewise wives with their dead husbands. A remarkable instance that the author does not mention is that of Thomas Hardy, who is said to have neglected his wife for years – but then, when she was dead, found himself the vehicle for a remarkable outpouring of love poetry about her. (So it seems that even the more psychoanalytically disreputable manoeuvres can sometimes redeem themselves spectacularly.)

It may be churlish to criticise a book that displays an exemplary choice of topic, and that embodies so much humanity and good sense but, as I read, two things bothered me, and they are perhaps worth mentioning. The first was the difficulty I found in applying Mrs Pincus's theoretical frame of reference to some of the cases she cites. She describes the marriages of 'Joy' and 'Sibyl' in glowing terms – both of which

exuded a sense of beauty and goodness, and created homes which became a source of delight for their friends. The wives adored their husbands . . . the husbands cherished their wives.

Apart from my feelings of inferiority, never having witnessed such unions, let alone having taken part in one, I could not work out whether these were instances of projection or of identification. Both Joy and Sibyl went to pieces when their husbands died, apparently irreparably broken down and empty; but the 'object relations' theory Mrs Pincus employs did not help me to see why. More immediately illuminating, I would have thought, is the dramaturgical model in which Joy and Sibyl can be seen as flourishing in the presence of husbands who constitute their ideal 'audiences', and as wilting when this ideal audience dies.

My other worry took the form of irritation with the jargon of social work – of the 'helping professions'. To take one instance, Mrs Pincus uses the expression 'the bereavement situation' where what she seems to mean is 'bereavement'. 'Situation', 'interact', 'problem' and 'process' are words that rear their heads in paragraph after paragraph, deadening whatever they touch. Reading *Death and the Family*, I decided that reliance on these inert terms must itself constitute a repression: verbal formulae that those who cope with the wretched and helpless use in keeping at bay their own exasperation. Just as mourners need to rage irrationally at fate, so too I suspect, do those who give them professional succour.

Valentine Cunningham

Godabout

The Living and the Dying by TOM STACEY
Macmillan £3.95

A Real House by JANE GILLESPIE *Peter Davies* £3.50

Cross Purposes by HENRY CECIL *Michael Joseph* £3.75

Big Fleas and Little Fleas by TERENCE DE VERE WHITE *Gollancz* £3.50

When what happens next in a novel is possibly a miracle, it's not just modern readers who tend to return blankish stares. The novel itself, generally a stiffly humanistic old thing, has always been the least opportune of media to have God risk taking that kind of opportunity in. Tom Stacey doesn't mind: he'll let God have His way with his cast of Old Etonians, or at least put in the suggestion that He might have. Jim, a journalist devoted to his wife Rosa and their two daughters, falls incurably ill, but also falls madly in love with his old school-chum's wife. The narrator – his medic, god-father to one of the daughters, friend of the wife – becomes unwilling ally to the ensuing deception, as the new lovers scurry about the globe in pursuit of bedded bliss. Jim talks optimistically about having two coequal loves. An old vicar – at first sight just any old contingent man of God – talks for his part about the holiness of the heart's affections, and then, come Christmas, dies – considerably, it turns out, since somehow he's passed on his life to Jim, who makes an unexpected recovery.

Well, it's certainly not Tolstoy – it's hardly Susan Hill – but it's a brave try. It's also an odd try, not least because the push at unworldliness (Jim, it's finally hinted, will retreat from both his loves into the embrace of the One Love) seems pale and spectre-thin besides the nicely and knowingly worldly stuff with which much of the novel concerns itself. And more telling than the consultant's pious impression that Someone Else was 'present leading Jim back to consciousness' is the foxy self-presentation of the narrator. He skulks behind a calculated unassurancé ('I am told', 'So she said', 'I heard later'), only reluctantly allows himself to be named, and keeps the discussion away from his condoning role. Unsurprisingly, the miraculous leaves this modern artist of the finely fraught moral dilemma about to have another migraine.

Jane Gillespie's *A Real House* shows how even the looser modern relationships fail to guarantee that no one will be shunted ineluctably into some plightful corner or other. Misunderstandings between generations are, of course, by now so expectable they can even be funnily done. Old-fashioned (Sixties-style) drop-out Simon puts out his ever-complaining parents when he actually does return home; intert, nose-picking Paul unwittingly has his mother reading homosexuality into his more innocent relationships. But even here there's

real pain, as the mother of Griz (short for Griselda) acts too late to stop her daughter getting impatient and taking an overdose. Distinctly, however, the novelist also indicts Griz's own generation: a whole houseful of new-fashioned (Seventies-style) drop-in students presides over their friend's decline and decease. They all profess concern, but consistently fail to understand each other. Andy, no head, is thought to be on drugs; Carol, against expectation, is a virgin; Simon, heedlessly, makes Griz worse by handing on the Jesus he's about to dump. The juveniles' casual messings with God, their untied-down, minikin love-games, their playing at housekeeping turn out to be as menacing as parental heaviness. Altogether a bleak but well-timed set of thrusts.

Cross Purposes essays the lighter touch, but it's by no means short on deeply-felt concerns. The Bartons, a middle-class family smitten by inflation – they're down to British sherry and wondering where the next BUPA subscription is coming from – have their financial problems solved by scooping half-a-million on the pools. They appear not to have crossed the 'no-publicity' box, though, so they're soon running the gauntlet of grasping aunts (one wants fifty thou by Friday), needy vicars and scores of other assorted shysters. Still more interesting problems spring up, however, when the son, an inventive genius, confesses they hit the jackpot only by means of his electronic ink-eraser. What price now the earlier dubieties about the self-confessed con-man the family was reluctant to help rehabilitate? What, for that matter, is the ex-con getting up to preventing Vulgans from prosecuting the anonymous returners of the tiny remnant of the cash? So the ending, at least, has a delicate set of intrigues opening out, and has the air of fiction much more confident of itself than the novel's rather flatter middle. There the diatribes against miners and printers and rating authorities and the fulsomely extended praise of the BBC for the cheap music on Radio 3 scarcely pretend to be more than space-fillers. Still, even if, for this author, the inventiveness seems curiously a bit winded, this latest offering by Henry Cecil is not without its comically pick-you-up moments.

Terence de Vere White, another old and tried novel-writing hand, sturdily adds in his widow's mite (actually, twelve mite-sized fictions) to a week which rarely mounts much above the workpersonlike. Apparently *Big Fleas and Little Fleas* is only his first collection of short stories, but the tinier tactical space suits him as well as the novel's ampler zones have previously done. Admittedly, what his characters have to learn – all they have time to learn – is necessarily not much. But the glimmerings and gleanings of self-knowledge are always scrupulously marshalled. The settings are mainly Irish, but there's little that's ethnically unique about the tales: their coolly contoured integrities, their morally concerned nibblings, could spring, in fact, from almost anywhere in the English-speaking West. To be sure, success in short stories appears to come less elusively than success in novels, but with this volume Mr de Vere White praiseworthily joins the ranks of, to say no more, the very good short-fictionalists.

Television

Dennis Potter

Boardroom Bargains

Watching and admiring the assured manner in which the brightest and the best have been flapping their EPNS tongues at each other in Frederick Raphael's electronic Cambridge, I fell to wondering how many of the exquisite figures in the background have since made it as far up the ladder as that place in the clouds which hides the top rungs of the British Steel Corporation. After all, there must be *some* links between the vapid aphorisms tossed across the mellow quadrangles and the equally stunning performance of senior management in our biggest industries. Oxbridge undergraduates have consistently behaved as though bathed in footlights, but when they reach the executive chairs which are the legitimate rewards of their expensive education they are normally shielded from everything except the glare in a shop steward's eyes. Roger Graef's first *Decision* on Granada last week was thus a rare excursion into the secret world of the steelmasters, as well as a perfect demonstration how to temper boredom with incredulity.

Any self-respecting executive is bound to polish up his performance a bit when there is a camera squinting at him from the corner of the office, so it is fair to assume that Graef's biopsy on the BSC at work caught the happy-go-lucky fellows at their very best. Only God and the Japanese can possibly imagine what these people are like when the hood is put back on the lens, but we must regretfully suppose that there will not now be any glittering prizes to be made out of British steel. The rust has settled in the worst place of all, right between the bones of the head.

The Granada snoop-in took us along the convoluted entrails of a decision whether or not to buy direct-iron reduction plants from Korf of Germany at a cost of £26 million for one or (a bargain, they said) £43 million for two. It was possible to work out from the gabbled scatter of figures which momentarily sprayed across the top of a laminated desk that this new process would produce pelleted ore that was at least 5 per cent more expensive than the granulated ore which could be scraped out of the old blast furnaces the Corporation wants to close. And somewhere between the mathematics and the metallurgy the dim shapes of the dole queue were waiting to complete the parameters. We could sit back, therefore, and watch the way in which a publicly owned industry made sense of its various obligations, consulted its work force, added up its figures, guarded its budget in a tight time and protected the livelihood of thousands of families in some of our most depressed areas. Indeed, everything might have been especially set up to show that this week's concluding serial, *How Green Was My Valley*, was now a costume drama in every sense of the term.

At first, *Decision* was difficult to watch. The amount and ubiquity of filmed and televised drama mean that the conventions of fiction have invaded most areas of human discourse (and this realisation is one of the many incidental joys of Raphael's marvelously entertaining *The Glittering Prizes* on BBC-2). Thus our eyes and ears are trained to expect consecutive speech which bears more than a passing resemblance to English, and sometimes flashbacks, cutaways or time-swerves that gather up the reasons and the consequences for the decisions which the protagonists are seen to make. We look, so to speak, for a shape or a metalanguage that makes some sort of dramatic sense. It might even be said that our perpetually anxious search for order and stability now finds its happiest solace in those lower reaches of television drama, the weekly serials and series. We are, absolutely, at the *Crossroads*, for not since Noah and his family stared out of the porthole has so large a proportion of the world's population sat around looking hopefully at a lighted hole.

But the BSC executives did not seem to fit into any of these pictures, even though a degree of tension was tipped in by the knowledge that they had a deadline to meet after which Korf could not hold the so-called bargain price for the deal. The planning department had a cactus on the window sill, a man fiddled his pen between his fingers, and the eager salesman from Dusseldorf really did have an authentically square head, but otherwise there were few signs of scriptwriters, casting directors or set designers. We were plunged straight into a strange, shapeless world of unfinished speeches, stumbling pauses, casual incompetence and bewildering indifference about the ultimate consequences of any decision. It was a very bad play altogether.

The policy committee debated the merits of one unnecessary new plant as against two unnecessary new plants, but only the Board member for finance, Lionel Pugh, made a point of showing that all planned needs for iron ore could be met by 'using one of our existing but condemned blast furnaces'. There would in any case be a surplus of the stuff even without the new Korf plants. But it was obvious that the chairman, Sir Monty Finniston, had made up his mind, and the maths were redrawn accordingly. 'We ought to get the figures post the event and not before it,' the chairman said, sensibly reducing forward planning to the status of mere hindsight. No union representatives were allowed to put even bowed and cringing heads round the door. The official nominally responsible for industrial relations said not a single word. And a veritable horde of highly paid managers, directors and whathaveyou swung (with only Mr Pugh dissenting) behind the chairman's wishes, though it was clear that

some of them had doubts which reached almost as far as their spines. 'People just have to back their judgment,' said Finniston with an understandable twinkle in his eye.

And so they bought the two Korf plants at the bargain price of £43 million. Since then, of course, this has risen with inflation to £56 million, but the bottom line is clearly capable of being adjusted to fit any number of noughts. On the evidence of Graef's remarkable programme any man who loses his job when a blast furnace closes is entitled to throw the nearest lump of old iron at the double-glazed windows of the BSC headquarters. I still cannot quite believe that the level of argument we heard genuinely represents the accepted modes of top management discourse. Surely only the late hour of transmission and the boredom of the um-ah-er dialogue has prevented a public outcry.

Perhaps, though, television has accustomed us to a languid tolerance of other people's messes. Everybody makes mistakes, as *Doctor Who* discovered on Saturday afternoon. 'What you have done,' he said to a bumbling scientist, 'could result in the destruction of all life on this planet.' An unexceptional accusation at the start of a suitably ghastly new story about vegetation which colonises human flesh. A sort of direct reduction plant on the Korf model. Could it be that the spectacular rise in the price of potatoes means that formerly humble vegetables are now going to be shown as bizarre and threatening objects? Market gardeners and Marxists know that pressures on a staple diet must eventually buckle the roots of popular drama. From now on it's chips with nothing.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Unruly Son

Henry IV Parts One and Two and Henry V
Aldwych

The Ginger Man Shaw

One of the more painful memories of my brief and amateur acting career is attacking the roaring Hotspur with such bravado that the blade fell off my sword and I was obliged to kill him with the hilt. All right: nothing as bad as that happens to Alan Howard's Hal at the Aldwych. Nevertheless, the fights in *Henry IV Part One* do have a schoolhall quality about them – mighty warriors crudely swatting at weapons poised like conkers and deliberately missing the obvious blow to the body – and seem oddly insipid beside the invisible battles of *Henry V*, which consist mainly of cries, whinnys, thundering hooves, whistling arrows and fleshy thumps, heard by Emrys James's solitary and wide-eyed Chorus. The contrast is symptomatic, too. Almost everything is right with *Henry V*; and though it would be unjust to suggest that almost everything is wrong with its precursors, both plays

could certainly be improved. Cues could be crisper, pauses more pregnant, the verse more articulately delivered, especially in the first half of *Henry IV Part Two*, which seems to have just blundered out of a four-poster in its night-shirt. Where's the attention to detail, the exacting imagination that marks Terry Hands's production of the least fashionable, accessible and likeable of the trilogy? I find little in either *Henry IV* to compare with the one small scene in which Henry V offers money to the soldier Williams – the man resisting the gift, the king tactfully throwing it aside, the man left to flounder between the desire to preserve his pride and red-faced acknowledgment of his poverty.

Still, some individual performances have matured since we first saw them last spring and summer. Emrys James's Henry IV, a mean-minded dwarf at Stratford, is now more plausibly royal and more sentient – indeed, abjectly enamoured of his wayward son. Brewster Mason, too, has improved with the trip to London. His Falstaff, whom I remember as a stately Victorian usher, has become less headmasterly and more raffish, until one could almost imagine him sneaking liquor upstairs to a feast in the dorm, like one of the disreputable prep-school teachers in *Decline and Fall*. He still lacks much sense of fun, and it's hard to believe in him as the impish highwayman who waylays the merchants at Gadshill with a cry of 'young men must live!'. But he has charm, affability, and a raddled authority that makes him the natural centre of most gatherings. It is he, as much as anyone, who brings *Henry IV* back to life in the later stages of *Part Two*. There's a marvellous mellowness about the scenes in the orchard at Gloucester, with autumn leaves sprinkled across the stage, Sidney Bromley's Shallow twittering on about his imaginary past, Trevor Peacock's tiny, arthritic Silence singing ballads, and Mr Mason all fruity and genial, beaming at the company from above his wine and whiskers, Santa Claus on the razzle. Maurice Morgann, the first critic to analyse Falstaff's character, declared that we should 'curse the severity of the poetic justice which consigns our old good-natured delightful companion to the Fleet'; and, for once, I think we do.

It isn't surprising that the prince is fond of him. Mr Howard delivers that chilling and disdainful soliloquy,

I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyoked humour of your idleness

with a melancholy affection for good times whose passing he foresees: at no point do we feel he's simply using his old crony as a sort of extra-mural course in the sociology of libertinism. Throughout the three plays a conflict nags away inside this Hal, and it is always between his public and private selves: between duty and pleasure in *Henry IV*, between policy and conscience in *Henry V*. The public man roars and reverberates ('bid them come down-ah, or void the field-ah') at times of battle or proclamation. The private one is pale, pinched, confidential and uneasy. We catch him canoodling with Doll Tearsheet and, in his maturity, imploring a complacent archbishop to give some moral justification for the invasion of France, turning painfully away after ordering an execu-

tion, showing his relief that Harfleur has capitulated without bloodshed, and desperately begging God not to punish him at Agincourt for his father's usurpation of the throne: 'not today, oh lord, oh, not today!' The performance seems more mannered in the crannies of the Aldwych than it did in the wide open spaces of the Memorial Theatre, and also sounds vocally rougher, as if Mr Howard had been gargling with brine; but it is always intelligent and always interesting, always packed with tension.

The rejection of Falstaff is, as it should be, a crucial moment, encapsulating much of the evening. In comes Howard, all gold from forehead to toes, and lumbers like some gorgeous robot over to the palpitating Mason. He wears a mask, and it seems that the mask has trapped and depersonalised him. But, after a few moments, he lifts it, and it's the same Hal underneath, saying what he must and hating himself for saying it: man as well as totem, but totem as much as man. As Mr Howard sees it, the character is constantly trying and failing to achieve human wholeness, an integrity of personality in which public and private selves are reconciled; and that is perhaps why he is at his most satisfying in *Henry V*, a play which itself seems publicly self-confident and privately self-doubting. Shakespeare, too, is torn between duty and conscience, triumphant chauvinism and compassion for the victim and underdog, down to Tim Wylton's mangy Bardolph and the tattered remnants of the Falstaff gang. As John Arden once argued, writing in these columns:

The surface meaning of *Henry V* is certainly that Agincourt was a lovely war, and I've no doubt this was the meaning Shakespeare intended his audience to find in it. But there are so many corrections of this view in the structure that one is forced to wonder if the author had not written a secret play within the official one.

Mr Hands's production, like Mr Howard's performance, allows us to see both these plays comprehensively, coolly, without bias. At a time when directors are only too apt to throw set 'lines' at their audiences, as if we were so many plump fish, this is a brave achievement.

Donleavy's *Ginger Man* was much compared to *Look Back in Anger* in its day, often to its discredit, since its anti-hero seemed more interested in exploiting society than in galvanising it. 'I tend toward the private income,' gently admits Sebastian Dangerfield when someone asks him the summit of his ambitions. Moreover, his author tends to romanticise him – liar, seducer, drunk, leech, whatever he might objectively be. Yet isn't he more honest than Jimmy Porter, who has his unadmitted envies, his suppressed covetousness? And, as an unapologetic drop-out, isn't he a more topical figure now? It's a bluff, rumpled, irritating, attractive play, which needs a big central performance, and unluckily doesn't get it from John Shrapnel, too soft and sleek at the Shaw. He extracts the danger from Dangerfield: he hasn't the violence which Richard Harris, that 'coiled spring' of an actor, reportedly found in the part. The coiled spring inside Mr Shrapnel would hardly drive a clockwork frog.

Opera

Bayan Northcott

Pitfalls

Benvenuto Cellini Covent Garden
Paul Bunyan Radio 3

I was a 17-year-old schoolboy steeped in Barzun's *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* when the Carl Rosa Opera brought its pioneering production *Benvenuto Cellini* to London in 1957. Considering Berlioz's relative neglect at the time (despite Beecham) and the company's modest resources, it seemed a risky enough venture. Yet I have never forgotten my excitement seated in some fusty recess of the long-since demolished Chiswick Empire as Arthur Hammond's little orchestra – more wind than strings – dashed gamely into that electrical overture. Perhaps the odd moment of farce, the occasional flat-footed cadence in what followed raised passing doubts; perhaps rounding off a story of artistic triumph with the reprise of an earlier drinking chorus did not, somehow, seem quite right. But what did these details matter in an opera so crammed with striking situations, from the carnival that turns to tragedy, to the tension and deliverance of the statue-casting scene, and with a score of such pace, wit and novelty? Least of all was I ever in doubt about the work's overall dramatic sweep and effectiveness.

Nor was I after Colin Davis's ebullient reading at the Proms in 1972. So that I am tempted to put down my present disillusion entirely to the current Covent Garden revival. There was certainly little enough decent singing to be heard on the opening night. Elizabeth Harwood as Teresa was struggling with a throat infection, Nicolai Gedda as Cellini sounded strangled, and Anne Howells as Ascanio uncharacteristically rough. As if by way of compensation, there seemed to be a general agreement – prompted or not by John Copley; who could say? – that everyone, principals and crowds alike, should stagger about the stage as wildly as possible. Jules Bastin's unbelievable Balducci was perhaps just over-acting; David Ward's strutting grotesque of a Pope Clement must have been worked out in rehearsal and simply annulled the gravity of the music Berlioz has given him. But the saddest thing, for all Colin Davis's frenzy in the pit, was what the woolly acoustics of Covent Garden did to Berlioz's score itself; once the uniformly brilliant edge is taken off the sound, how patchy, short-winded and eccentric the underlying invention often seems. If it is an axiom that a great opera 'works' no matter how indifferent the performance or performing conditions – as with Mozart, Verdi and even Wagner – then I fear, after all, that *Benvenuto Cellini* just fails to make it.

Any assessment of the stage-worthiness or otherwise of the resurrected Auden-Britten collaboration of 1941, *Paul Bunyan*, will have to wait until the English Music Theatre

Company's production later this year. Like all his original dramatic texts, Auden's treatment of the giant lumberjack of American mythology is more of a moral pageant than a theatrical narrative, and if the characters do not actually 'flop down on their knees', as Isherwood used to dread, the final message to the American students for whom it was written borders on the scoutmasterly. But the lyrics are a feast of plangency and wit and the allusions have dated surprisingly little. Britten's score is considerably more substantial than expected, ranging in style from ballad, blues and vaudeville pastiches by way of broadly Copland-esque landscape music to some quite extended scenas, pre-echoing the procedures of *Peter Grimes*, still four years off. Yet for all its fascinations it sums up very much the path of 'applied' music theatre he was specifically not to follow. It was amusing to hear that Auden had included parts for soprano 'dog' and 'cats' on the grounds that an all-male opera would be impossibly monotonous. Exactly ten years later, Britten was to produce his masterpiece *Billy Budd* – for all-male cast.

Films

John Coleman

Breaking Ground

Ankur – The Seedling Phoenix, East Finchley

Operation: Daybreak Warner West End 3; Cinecenta; ABC, Edgware Road

A Window to the Sky Ritz

House of Mortal Sin Warner West End 1; Metropole

A subject of at worst ignorance, at best controversy in his own giant patchwork quilt of a country, Satyajit Ray is certainly the sole Indian director of any note in the West. Nevertheless, it does seem a bit hard when *Sight and Sound*, briefly praising a first film shown at the Berlin Festival in 1974, should end thus: 'An impressive new actress, Shabana Azmi, must surely be later employed by Ray.' The film in question is Shyam Benegal's *Ankur*, for once a Hindi rather than a Bengali export, and it might – one would have thought – have been judged on its own merits. True, one of the more substantial of these is Miss Azmi, whose delicately shaded portrayal of Lakshmi, a low-caste village woman damned in a drunken deaf-mute husband she yet loves, is in no way hindered by the fact that she is extremely pretty; but this is not just some carbon copy lifted from the works of Ray. Mr Benegal has come confidently out of a background in making commercials to provide at least a middle distance for, and sometimes a painful close-up of, the pachydermatous idiocies of the Indian system of caste. He fairly rubs one's nose in a moral midden, making his central character one Surya (Anant Nag), the unwittingly arrogant student son of a rich farmer forced by his father to take over a

seedy family holding in the sticks. Father is no saint, having established a mistress and another son by her on a neighbouring property. No one, in fact, behaves well, unless – in revolutionary terms – it is the little boy who literally casts the first stone against prejudice at the bitter end.

And Lakshmi has had her tremendous tirade just before. By metropolitan standards, Mr Benegal's film easily reads as melodramatic. Her husband, a potter whose occupation's gone when metal utensils become common in the village, drinks to drown his loss of pride; is caught at it; and, head shaved, ridden backwards on a donkey into exile. Bored, imperious Surya persuades her to his bed and gets her pregnant. Meanwhile the child-bride we see him marrying in the beginning has grown. She turns up and turfs Lakshmi out, not so much – one is made to feel – from jealous suspicion as from a sense of the *fitness* of things: it is wrong that her citified Surya should have allowed a thing of Lakshmi's caste to prepare his morning coffee and make his bed, let alone share it. Lakshmi's husband returns, with money; there is a disgraceful whipping; the final outcry, the last, first stone. It has been said of great cinema that, no matter how it delves into the particular or even because of such delvings, it touches a universal pulse: this is canvassed as Film's unique advantage (dealing as it does in sign language) over other forms of art. It has often been true of Ray. One doubts the relevance of such a proposition here.

Ankur is a genuinely strange work, compellingly photographed and assembled, crammed with exotic detail: the red sari of Lakshmi moving in long shot through greenery towards her hut; an early procession winding among huge boulders to the sound of drums; Surya's hand on Lakshmi's flinching shoulder; a cameo visit from the nervously laughing, scandalised priest; Surya, solitary, igniting fireworks on a festival day devoted to the goddess of wealth, followed by a drunken night of gambling. Much of this hinges on hypocrisy of a blind order (the drinking, for instance) which one can only witness with privileged indignation: our faults are other, less ingenuous. But to be afforded a harsh sequence of eavesdroppings on a closed, ritualistic society – with the wretched Surya as our intermediary – is something fresh from Indian cinema: a breaker of ground.

Lewis Gilbert's *Operation: Daybreak* is, we are assured, drawn from a true story of three Free Czechs being parachuted back into their homeland in 1942 to kill the cultured monster and Hitler's favourite, Heydrich. The veracity of most of the events may be trusted since so much goes apley: a sprained ankle, a train crossing another at precisely the wrong moment; a murderous gun jamming. No run-of-the-mill script would allow of such a series of misadventures (and, indeed, the pretty wholehearted ratting on his comrades by one of the original trio would jar in 'fiction' plotting). About a quarter – impossible to divorce quantitatively from the whole – is decent, admonitory, quite unexpected film-making, maybe just because it hews awkwardly to truth. There is also

the brilliance of Henri Decae's location photography, which magically adds a visual edge, particularly to street incidents, but also to a bleak, snowy parachute-drop. Against these virtues must be set the screaming Britishness of the words doled out by Ronald Harwood. Timothy Bottoms and Anthony Andrews (the second excellent beyond the call of language) are the brave Czechs, who shoot each other when trapped in a flooded crypt; Martin Shaw is the tormented baddie; Anton Diffring smoothly uncoils some real German, with subtitles, as Heydrich. As lest-we-forget matter, including a capsule version of Lidice's fate, I welcome the vulgarised occasion.

Larry Peerce, last seen directing a Liz Taylor face-lift in *Ash Wednesday*, emits another ghastly weepie in *A Window to the Sky*, one of those inspirational movies (again based on a true story) that tries so hard to manipulate the emotion it lowers life yet another crucial notch. Marilyn Hassett (a Seventies Dorothy McGuire) bares more white teeth than I have closed on hot dinners as Jill Kinmont, a girl-skier who nearly made the Olympics back in the mid-Fifties but ended up dead from the neck down instead. The film is dead from the neck up. *House of Mortal Sin* is a would-be horror movie, finest around its credits when 'A Peter Walker Production' comes up besides a crucified Christ: come on, now, Pete. The French month at the NFT has begun: see the two Pialat films at all costs.

Photography

John Naughton

Familiar Faces

Paul Strand: Photographs 1915-68 National Portrait Gallery annexe

Even if he had achieved nothing else, Paul Strand's earliest photographs would have earned him a reputation as a great photographer. In a series of unforgettable images captured during the years 1915-20 he served notice on a doubting world that photography was now in business as a serious medium in its own right – a claim which prompted Alfred Stieglitz to observe that, with Strand, photography had finally arrived in the 20th century.

But in fact, those pictures were only the beginning. Now, under the joint auspices of the National Portrait Gallery and the Arts Council, a 300-print retrospective of Paul Strand's work over 53 years can be seen at 15 Carlton House Terrace until 4 April. As a record of the development of a great visual artist, it is a remarkable show. But many people will also find in it an admirably succinct (if inevitably incomplete) statement of what much of modern photography is about. Many of the images presented, and the photographic treatment accorded them, will be hauntingly familiar: the details of faces, of buildings, of rocks and plants; a

fascination with desolate things and places; a fine appreciation of the subtlety of natural lighting. Our familiarity with such images stems from the fact that they have been incorporated into – indeed have virtually become – the accepted modern photographic idiom. Walking through this exhibition, one is persistently aware of a feeling of having somehow been here before. And, of course, in a way one has. The significant thing about Paul Strand (as a glance at the dates of the various prints confirms) is that in many cases he was here before anyone else. Time and again one is reminded of the extent to which Strand was responsible for formulating the idiom, for dictating the ways in which photographers – and, through them, we – see the world.

The prints on show demonstrate this very clearly. His famous 1915 picture of Wall Street, for example, which shows ant-like figures scurrying past the cavernous porticos of a bank, conveys its message about early 20th-century capitalism as brusquely as anything Upton Sinclair ever wrote. And the confident manipulation of shapes in *The White Fence* (1916) is the work of someone who clearly understood, but was not overawed by, the Cubists and their successors.

Having thus established a break with his inheritance, Strand then moved inwards,

exploring the camera's ability to record fine detail and experimenting with natural lighting. As he worked, he left a trail which lesser photographers have followed ever since. His tight, razor-sharp abstract *Wire Wheel* (1918) has innumerable modern counterparts, as do his details of lathes, ciné cameras and other machinery. In looking closer and closer at the ground, at the details of rocks and plants, Strand started a trend which has become desperately overworked. This exhibition shows that the well-head at least was pure; in particular, his picture of an iris, taken in Maine in 1928, is a triumph of compositional balance and natural lighting.

Since those early years Strand has travelled widely. His sojourns abroad – notably in Gaspé, Mexico, Italy and South Uist – have yielded a mine of remarkable images, particularly portraits. Strand's subjects are almost always 'ordinary' folk, people who have life's terrible messages etched on their furrowed, sombre, composed faces. Almost always they look straight into the lens. Their expressions evoke a sense of rapport, of trust, of *consent* which pays tribute to the integrity of an artist who dared to photograph faraway people as individuals rather than as the objects of colour-magazine curiosity.

Weekend Competition

No 2398 Set by E. O. Parrott

One of the features of *Private Eye* is the insertion of topical 'bubbles' into photographic studies of the famous. Competitors are asked to do the same for the *Mona Lisa*, the *Rape of the Sabine Women*, or other famous paintings. Make that very famous paintings. By 20 February.

Result of No 2395 Set by M. Gracechurch

Competitors were asked to mirror the present difficulties of the NHS in an extract of *Dr Finlay's Casebook* or such like writing.

Report by The Lemon Kid

As a long-standing non-fan of *Finlay* and the like, I found myself queasily at sea with this entry. But the undersigned amused me and I will send them £5 each in due course.

Biggles eased back the throttles and the great white Sunderland with the glistening red cross settled on the estuary like some giant swan. The tousled head of Algy popped through the hatch.

'The medics say they're worried about the kind of reception these boys'll give 'em,' he shouted over the din of the engines.

'Flying in a bunch of strike-breaking quacks to a different Regional Health Board never was my cup of tea,' rejoined Biggles.

'Rather not,' agreed the other, 'but if you ask me . . . Oh losh! Look over there – that chap on the sand waving a noserag!'

'It's von Stalhein, the consultants' spokesman!' exclaimed Biggles. 'See if you can raise Ginger on the RT,' he added, chopping the engines. Seconds later Ginger's voice came crackling over the headphones: 'Spot of bad news for you laddies,' came the grim message.

'Those supplies for the local infirmary that Transport Division dropped this morning are all in the drink – the brolly didn't open.'

Biggles's lips pursed. 'Now I see why the CO's in favour of bally paybeds,' he murmured.

D. SIMPSON

'I didn't queue-jump!' piped Willoughby in his unmistakable falsetto. 'There were two queues and I just happened to be in the shorter one.'

He put down his glass of Lucozade and pinched the bottom of a passing nurse.

'Put it on the bill!' he chuckled.

His lean, taciturn visitor questioned him in soft, well-mannered tones: 'But what about the chronically ill who have no money?'

'What about them?' roared Willoughby apoplectically. 'They join the longer queue of course. Don't you ever listen?'

As he spoke his consultant entered the room and walked quietly to his bedside.

'It's bad news, I'm afraid. The condition is irreversible.' Willoughby glared at the medical man in irate astonishment. 'But that's not possible! Haven't you read my notes, man? I'm a private patient!'

TIM HOPKINS

Dr Graham Kirk, MD, FRCP, NATSOPA, etc, etc, scrubbed his hand vigorously. He loved his work, and his patients loved him for it. Apart from his beautiful wife, Sylvie, and his two point four strapping children Geoffrey and Jonathan, nothing interested him more than the welfare of those whom Providence had put in his care. He was very devoted to his 'mission', as he laughingly (albeit seriously) referred to what some of his less devoted colleagues saw as nothing more than a job.

There was a knock, and Matron came in. She looked tense and drawn. 'Dr Kirk,' she said, 'your colleagues are after your blood.'

Graham Kirk did not hesitate. 'One pint or two?' he asked.

C. VITA-FINZI



Assiac

Chess Board

No 1368

The Challengers

A Swiss again, ten rounds with 65 competitors provided fairly strong international competition, including previous winners and near-winners who had tried again and again. One of these, D. E. Rumens (Old Coulsdon) won it this time most deservedly with the respectable score of 8½; a tie with the Israeli S. Kagan decided in the Englishman's favour by Sonneborn-Berger. Here (Black against Goldschmidt) is one of the winner's many good games.

1) d4,Ktf6; 2) c4,e6; 3) Ktc3,Bb4; 4) Bg5,h6; 5) Bh4,Bc3; 6) bc;d6; 7) f3,Ktbd7; 8) e4,e5; 9) Bd3,O-O; 10) Kte2,Re8; 11) O-O,Ktf8; 12) Qd2,g5; 13) Bf2,Ktg6; 14) h4?;Kth5; 15) hg:hg; 16) Be3,Kthf4; 17) g3,Kth3; 18) Kg2,Kg7; 19) Rh1,Rh8; 20) Ktg1,Kthf4; 21) gf:Rh1; 22) Kh1:gf; 23) Kg2. Practically forced, fe; 24) Qe3,Ktf4; 25) Kf2,Qh4; 0-1.

A remarkably incisive game (in the lower echelons) was Kemperman-Precker.

1) e4,d5; 2) ed:Ktf6; 3) d4,Ktd5; 4) c4,Ktb6; 5) h3,g6; 6) Ktf3,Bg7; 7) Ktc3,O-O; 8) Be3,Ktc6; 9) Qd2,Re8; 10) O-O,e5; 11) d5,Kta5; 12) Bb6:ab; 13) b4. Continuing on what turns out to be a suicidal conception, e4!; 14) Kte1,Qf6!; 15) Kb2,b5! Threatening . . . b4 if the Kt were taken and opening further lines; 16) cb:e3!; 17) fe:Re4; 18) ba: Bon appetit!; 19) Kc1,Ra5; 20) Ktc2,Ra2! The Rook, of course, taboo on account of tt; 21) Qd3,Bf5; 22) e4,Bh6; 23) Rd2,Be4!; 24) Kta2:Qb2; 25) Kd1,Qb1; 26) Ktc1,Bd3; 27) Bd3:Qb2; 28) Ff1,Qc3; 29) Rff2,Rb1; 30) g4,Bd2; 31) Rd2:Qb2; 0-1.

What cast a shadow over an otherwise pleasing Congress was the nagging fear about the next one. Let's face it that but for the Zettlers' generous £5,000 this (the 51st) Hastings Congress would have been a non-starter, despite the contributions by the Slater Foundation, the Friends of Chess, the Hastings Borough Council and a great many of us who chipped in fivers and small cheques. Considering that Hastings is the traditional British event enjoying world-wide recognition and considering the duty of giving our talented youngsters the chance of IM and GM norms it is imperative to establish the future of the Congress on a properly sound rather than the usual makeshift basis. This may require a modicum from an official purse, and efforts to that effect are under way. Let's do more than wishing them well; let's press for them to be successful.

As a rare treat for our problem-addicts the 4-pointer is a brand new two-mover which the author kindly sent me. It is dedicated to F.I.D.E. For 6 ladder-points B takes a mere three moves to make sure of the win. C (for 7) takes twice as many moves to force the draw. Helpful hint: funeral of a Bishop. Usual prizes, entries by 16 February.

A: R. S. Trottman 1976: Mate in two /r3k1/1Qkt3K1/3PP3/B1Kt1R3/b4P2/24/.

B: G. M. Kiljakin 1925: /8/7p/3kt1K2/1p1Kt2p1/6k1/6P1/5PP1/8/.

C: V. & M. Platov 1907: /5Bk1/2R5/2p4P/p4p2/1p3P2/1P6/7p/1bK5/.

Report on No 1365

A: 1: Kte6!! (. . . fe: ruled out by 2) fe:t, etc), Rae8; 2) Rg8:t!!; Rg8; 3) Qh6:t!!; etc.

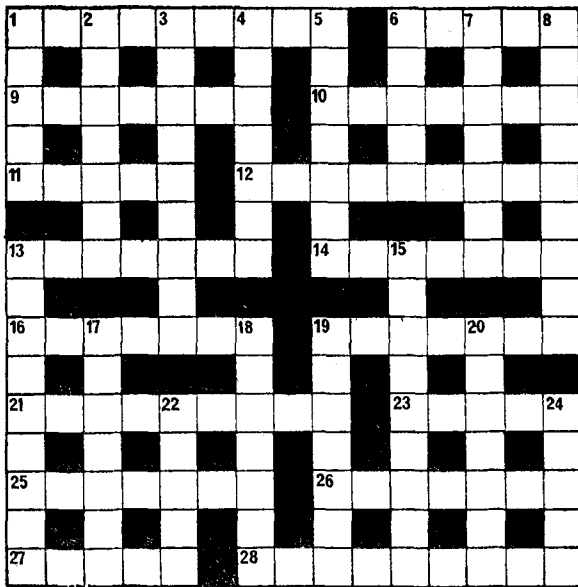
B: 1) c7!, Kc7; 2) ab:t,Kb8; 3) b7!, and the 'movebound' K must leave his R in the lurch.

C: 1) b6! (or f4??,Kb7; and wins), c6; 2) f4! Ka7? losing), f6; 3) Ka6,c4; 4) a5,c3; Black forced to allow stalemate since . . . c5?? would be punished by 5) Kb5,c3; 6) a6,c2; 7) Kc6,c1=Q; 8) a7tt.

A tough lot. Prizes: G. Abrahams, E. Allan, M. P. Furmston, E. Jarah, G. W. Richardson.

Weekend Crossword 1150

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1150, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 17 Feb.



ACROSS

- Kind of garments which need gathering (9).
- Reserved as Ramsey about a goalless draw? (5).
- Strange men dare to be called something different (7).
- One who forms a queue for a dish? (7).
- Material for a Russian (5).
- Prove this has turned into a Dickens character (9).
- Stupid actions as the unfit retreat amid enemies (7).
- Meals would be superior if one didn't have seconds (7).
- Gospel as retreat for member and part of church (7).
- Abuse although alive to change (7).
- Low fellow enters playwright for the defence (9).
- Drive sovereign without air turning back (5).
- Provided a quotation to give extra information about the leader (7).

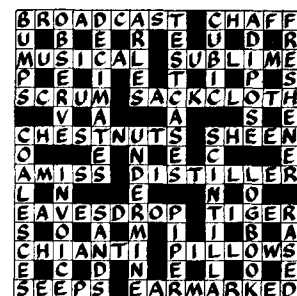
- Unpleasant but a change of heart could produce a return of feeling (7).
- Waters rush back (5).
- Foreigners see madness in object of English game (9).

DOWN

- Annoys informers (5).
- '— Good is the plea of the scoundrel' (Blake) (7).
- A beautiful place and a call for moderation (9).
- Wrong four needs provided by garden produce (7).
- Accounts for explosive noises (7).
- Collect for a service (5).
- Pole cut into several parts (7).
- Sample of a street being rebuilt (9).
- Part of boat has entertainment without expense (9).
- Something supplied by advertiser with foresight? (9).
- Shorten with a spanner (7).
- Famous swimmer has name in newspaper article (7).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1148



Prizewinners to No 1148

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Clive Anderson (London SW17)
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Theatres

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EMBASSY THEATRE. Swiss Cottage. 'The Homecoming' tonight at 7.30 p.m. 'Little Murders' by Jules Feiffer. 11, 12 & 13 Feb. at 7.30 p.m. Box office open Mon.-Fri. 2-6 p.m. Tel. 722 8186.

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NEW END. 435 4116. (Hampstead Tube) 'Clownmaker' by Richard Crane, about Nijinsky, Diaghilev and the Ballet Russes. 8 p.m. night, ends 8 Feb. 10.30 p.m. 6 & 7 Feb. 'Inopportune moment, Charlotte'.

OLD VIC. The National Theatre. 928 7616. Tonight, Mon. & Tues. 8.30, tomorrow 2.15 & 7.30. 'Plunder' by Ben Travers. Wed. 7 p.m., Thursday, 2 p.m. 'Hamlet'. Thurs. 8 p.m. 'Happy Days'.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Evgs 8. Sats 5 & 8.30. James Bolam, Jane Asher & Stephen Moore in Christopher Hampton's new play 'Treats'.

SUGAWN THEATRE. Duke of Wellington, 119 Balls Pond Road, N1. A celebration of James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake'. Devised and directed by John Quinn. 9/12 & 16/19 February. Curtain up 8 p.m. Tel. 254 1458. Admission 50p.

THEATRE ROYAL WINDSOR. 95 61107. From Tues. 'The Grass is Greener' by Hugh & Margaret Williams.

VANBRUGH THEATRE CLUB. To 7 Feb. Arnold Ridley's comedy thriller 'The Ghost Train'. From 11 Feb. Harold Pinter's 'The Collection' & 'The Lover'. Details: RADA, 62 Gower St, WC1. 636 7076.

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON. Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 10 Feb. Film: 'La Jetée'. 12 Feb. 'Factors Controlling the Number of Road Accidents' by Professor R. J. Smeed.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A lecture entitled: 'The Historian as Partisan' will be given by Professor Sir Keith Hancock on 10 February 1976 at University College (Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre), Gower Street, WC1 at 5.30 p.m. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

PHILIP JENKINSON presents 'The Evolution of the Musical', 2.30-6.30 p.m. Saturday, 21 February. Tickets 50p (students & OAPs 30p) and details (s.a.e. please) from SASS, Goldsmiths' College, New Cross SE14 6NW or at door.

LABOUR CAMPAIGN for Mental Health: hear Dr Mia Kellmer-Pringle, Director National Children's Bureau, and Alf Morris, Minister for the Disabled, speak on this theme 'No Childhood'. In the Chair: Millie Miller MP. 18 Feb. 7 p.m. Grand Committee Room, House of Commons.

PROFESSOR SIR HERMANN BONDI FRs, speaks on 'Defence & the Citizen: the position of the Scientist'. The 5th Leverhulme Colloquium, 6 p.m. Thurs. 1 February at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle St, London W1. Details from the Council for Science and Society, 3/4 St. Andrew's Hill, London EC4.

BRAINS TRUST with Lord Boothby, Cyril Smith MP & Baroness Gatskell. Mon. 9 Feb. 8 p.m. in Hill House, 11/2 Endsleigh St, London WC1. For students.

STUDY GROUP on Arab Nationalisation with Mordell Klein. Tues. 10 Feb. 8.30 at Hill House.

SOCIOLOGY OF ANGLO-JEWRY. 'Life Styles', a study group led by Dr Barry Kosmin. Wed. 11 Feb. 6 p.m. at Hill House.

YOUNG MAPAM (Socialist Zionist Movement) are having a meeting, 'Chile - Helping the Refugees', a talk by Anne Browne. Co-ordinator of the Joint Working Group for Aid to Refugees from Chile in the UK, at 8 p.m. at 37 Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6 on Sunday, 8 February.

WE MADE BRITAIN: WE MUST SAVE IT Series of meetings organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) on consecutive Fridays at 7.30 p.m. until 2 April, at Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, NW5 (Turnell Park Tube). Full list of titles available from above address.

BUDDHISM. Talk and discussion. Sundays 4.30 p.m. BBA, The Meeting House 120 Heath St, Hampstead NW3. Tel. 388 4589.

'TOWARDS SELF-MANAGEMENT': Harold Blackham. Sun. 8 Feb. 11 a.m. Sunday Forum Sun. 8 Feb. 3 p.m. 'TV and the Community': Paul Bonner. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Justice, Law and Freedom' Tues. 10 Feb. 7 p.m. 'Prisoners of Conscience': David Simpson. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion St., London WC1. 01-242 8032/3.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 7 Feb. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 10 Feb. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 11 Feb. 6.30 p.m. 'Mahayana Buddhism' and 'Theravada Buddhism'—two separate Study and Discussion Groups. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Public Talk & Questions, Sun. 8 Feb. 8 p.m. Free. 'The Process of Death'. S.a.e. for programme, book list & literature. UL7, 62 Queen's Gdns., London W2 3AL.

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